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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN THOMAS HARDY'S FICTION

by

(C) PHILIPPA JANE FAIRBAIRN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Family Relationships in Thomas Hardy's Fiction, submitted by Philippa Jane Fairbairn in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the significance of the family relationship in Thomas Hardy's fiction. Interpersonal relationships are important in all of Hardy's work, but the family relationship, where emotional ties are, for the most part, based on blood and dependency, can be considered to occupy a unique position.

In a number of novels Hardy presents us with the dilemma of the young adult who is torn between loyalty to a familiar way of life and a desire to reach out beyond the mental and physical confines of his parents' world. It is a dilemma which becomes particularly acute in any period of great social change, as the Victorian age was. To Hardy, the potential for tragedy in such a situation is particularly significant. He is very conscious of the way parent/child differences can lead to total estrangement, of the unhappiness which may arise from a parent's ambitions for his child and of the manner in which neglect of the special duties and responsibilities inherent in the family situation can rebound tragically upon either the parent or the child. All these issues are examined in the course of this study.

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KEY

The following letter designations are used throughout:

UGT	Under the Greenwood Tree
HE	The Hand of Ethelberta
RN	The Return of the Native
TM	The Trumpet-Major
MC	The Mayor of Casterbridge
W	The Woodlanders
TD	Tess of the d'Urbervilles
JO	Jude the Obscure

Introduction

Thomas Hardy's skill in creating characters with whom his reader can empathise, as well as the manner in which he maintained fidelity to human truth in those fictional characters, has generally received wide-spread acclaim. Typical of this praise are some of the comments found in Virginia Woolf's essay on Thomas Hardy. She attributes his power as a novelist to the way in which he is able to convince readers "that his characters are fellow-beings driven by their own passions and idiosyncrasies, while they have - and this is the poet's gift - something symbolical about them which is common to us all."[1] Many years later Albert Guerard advances a view very similar to Virginia Woolf's where he states that "Hardy was a realist in his creation of plausible men and women - often very ordinary human beings, reacting to the extraordinary claims of life. This human truth, both general and detailed, is the foundation of his strength as a tragic poet and novelist, and also, since the truth is accompanied by sympathy, the reason for his great popular appeal."[2]

The aura of credibility that permeates the novels of Thomas Hardy is gained in a number of ways, not the least of which is the emphasis upon and close observation of men and women as emotional beings. Inseparable from this particular angle of vision is the dramatization that we find within the novels of the relationships that the characters have, one with another, as well as with the physical and spiritual world that they inhabit. My concern here is with the human relationships, and above all with the pattern of family re-

lationships found in Hardy's fiction.

Most of the critical studies concerned with the deeper psychology and motivations of Hardy's characters pay little attention to the family relationships, concentrating instead upon the love affairs which so frequently culminate in tragedy. The reason for this choice is clear. Sexual attraction and the accompanying emotional passion must appear as a more powerful urge than family loyalty, and appear so, not only to the characters in their fictionalised predicament, but to the critics as well. This is the case when D. H. Lawrence, having stated that "the first and chiefest factor" in the Wessex novels "is the struggle into love and struggle with love", refines his meaning even further by declaring that he means "the love of a man for a woman and a woman for a man."[3] Likewise, Pierre d'Exideuil's The Human Pair in the Work of Thomas Hardy is deliberately restricted to a study of the sexual relationships, with d'Exideuil maintaining that love was, for Hardy, the most powerful of human preoccupations.

While in no way denying the validity of these and similar observations, it would seem that family ties and traditions cannot be broken or ignored so easily. The conflict between inherited patterns of behaviour and the awakening to outside pressures and influences is always a time of crisis, and even more so to the young man or woman who is trying to cope with the independence and responsibility which accom-

pany maturity. Further, the potential for tragedy lies in any parent/child relationship, as indeed it does in any close relationship between two people, but the sense of duty and responsibility, usually present within a family relationship, can create problems of its own. Often, too, one parent, frequently the mother, can be regarded as the driving force behind the family unit. Finding herself forced into this position by the other parent's physical absence, or by his unwillingness to shoulder the responsibilities that are his, or even by her own imperious personality, she tends to become a dominating figure whose rule generates either submission or rebellion on the part of her children. Each reaction represents a possible source of tragedy which Hardy was not slow to recognize. When both parents prove negligent and it is left to one of the children to take the responsibility for the remaining brothers, sisters and the parents themselves, the task can be a heartbreaking and thankless one, and the strain too great for the conscientious young adult who, idealistic in his (or her) immaturity, struggles against odds which prove to be overwhelming. Family pressures and ambition can also contribute to the final tragedy, as can remorse for disloyalty to kin. All these problems, the outcome of human fallibility, are compounded by the manner in which the failings of the individual family member rebound upon, and ultimately affect, all the others who belong to that unit. And the tragedy is that the pressure is often the greatest on those least able to cope.

Another important consideration concerns the quality of the relationships within the family unit. Perhaps surprisingly, for it would seem that Hardy himself was very close to his own mother and his sister Mary, the fictional characters are often not especially warm to, or understanding of, others in the family circle, and between parent and child there is frequently hostility, resentment and an unwillingness to compromise. Yet in The Hand Of Ethelberta, Christopher Julian, one of the central figures, declares to his sister, "The only feeling which has any dignity or permanence or worth is family affection between close blood-relations" (HE, 21). This statement is one of several in this novel that either elevate the attachment of kinship at the expense of the male/female love relationship, or else gauge the depth of an outside love relationship by using, as a yardstick, the relationship between family members.[4] In the course of this novel, which pays tribute to Ethelberta's devotion to her family, Julian and his sister share a closeness and a trust equalled by few among Hardy's total range of characters. That the relationship between Ethelberta and the Chickerel family is nowhere as intimate is evidenced by Ethelberta's singular failure to find, when distraught by the decision she has made to relinquish Julian for Picotee's sake, anyone among the whole family in whom she can confide. Ethelberta has taken upon herself a matriarchal role and with it comes the lonelfness and isolation of authority. Other parental figures, among them Mrs. Yeobright and Henchard, make similar discoveries.

A further issue raised by any consideration of the quality of family relationships concerns Hardy's conception of childhood. Although my discussion of parent/child relationships is, because of Hardy's own emphasis, confined almost entirely to adult children and their parents, the situation of the young child requires some comment. It is generally recognized that the child as portrayed by Hardy is no normal, carefree youngster, but a lonely figure who experiences, as Emma Clifford has pointed out, "very real problems of ill-adjustment and suffering."[5] Not least among these problems are an unsatisfactory or non-existent home life, and parents who display little in the way of care or affection. Yet Hardy offers no more than a glimpse at the plight of these children and, with the single exception of Jude, no insight into the childhood of his major characters. For this reason, I have chosen to concentrate upon adult children who are, because of their age, more able to interact with their parents and are, consequently, less the helpless victim. Like Hardy, I have, however, made an exception in the case of Jude and Jude's son, Father Time. The relationship between these two is crucial to the narrative of Jude the Obscure and much of Jude's failure as a father can be traced back to his own upbringing. Growing up without parents and without love, Jude has no base upon which he can build a relationship between himself and the child he has fathered.

The total number of parents and children found in Hardy's fiction has meant that some selection has been necessary. For

the most part, the novels discussed are the ones considered to be among Hardy's major works, with special attention being given to those, such as Tess of the d'Urbervilles, The Return of the Native and The Mayor of Casterbridge, which explore family attitudes in depth. Where, however, the parent/child relationship forms an important element in a less well-regarded novel, that novel has also been included. The exchange of roles, for example, which takes place when Ethelberta Petherwin accepts control of, and responsibility for, the fortunes of the Chickerel family accounts for the inclusion of The Hand of Ethelberta. Other minor novels, such as A Pair of Blue Eyes, depict, to some extent, the parent/child relationship, but in almost every instance this aspect is not considered to be developed enough to warrant special consideration. In The Well-Beloved, where three generations of mothers and daughters are dominated by Pierston's search for his ideal Avice, only the interaction between Avice III and her mother is actualized to any degree. It is, however, a very circumscribed relationship, subordinated to Pierston's love for Avice III and her mother's love for Pierston and distorted by the idiosyncrasies of Pierston's personality. Its singularity is emphasised by the extraordinary behaviour it generates. Avice II's encouraging of her daughter's sixty-year old suitor and attempts at forcing the girl to agree to the marriage are inexcusable, except in terms of her own love for Pierston. As a result, it becomes very difficult to examine the mother's attitude toward her daughter and the

daughter's toward her mother outside the context of their feelings for or against Pierston. For this reason, and because of Hardy's failure to bring any real substance to this particular relationship, The Well-Beloved is not included among those novels subjected to a closer scrutiny. As a final note, it should be mentioned that only one of Hardy's short stories is included in the discussion which follows. Many of the short stories do involve parents and their children, but none presents more impressively and more bitingly Hardy's vision of the warping effects of education upon filial love than "The Son's Veto". This particular short story is therefore examined at length.

My approach to the family relationships in Hardy's fiction has been initially in terms of the broad issue of social change, and more specifically the social change which resulted from the spread of education. The rigid class structure, so much a part of the lives of the older generation, did not yield completely, but some social mobility became possible for those who aspired to higher levels of learning. As Hardy's own experience proved, a professional career was not beyond the reach of the academically-gifted sons of working-class parents. Although the same opportunities were not available to the educated girl, improvement of her social status by means of a socially advantageous marriage became the goal which the ambitious girl set for herself, or her parents set for her.

Repeatedly in Hardy's novels educational disparity generates family conflict, in some instances to the point where the parent/child relationship collapses totally. Regardless of whether the child has acquired only the very basic rudiments of learning, or is able to progress to more advanced levels, exposure to new ideas and values has a serious impact upon the family unit. Parental authority is undermined as distraught parents see their traditional beliefs and customs abandoned by children whose newly acquired knowledge has rendered them scornful of anything which might be considered old-fashioned or "provincial". Differing aspirations and ideals collide head on and the "generation gap" becomes even more pronounced as the lines of communication between parents and their children break down. The lack of any real communication between the young and their elders becomes an integral part of a number of Hardy novels, among them Jude the Obscure, The Mayor of Casterbridge and The Woodlanders. It is also evident that the difficulties experienced by both parents and their children, while attempting to cope with the ramifications of social change, seriously weaken the sense of security which attends a stable pattern of existence. As a result, problems of social and physical dislocation become very real indeed. When the pressures, discords and frustrations which accompany education-nourished ambitions are involved the family is faced with even greater problems. For the parent or child who concentrates upon social and material success often does so at the expense of more human values and

concerns, and the misgivings and hesitations of the other family members become subordinated to his prearranged design.

The impact of education upon the family relationship can generally, in a Hardy novel, be described as negative. This is true not only at the superficial level (e.g. Grace's discomfiture in her father's house (The Woodlanders) but also at the deeper level (Mrs. Yeobright's and Clym's differing interpretation of "doing well" (The Return of the Native)). Education achieves this impact by introducing new values and ideas which disturb established patterns of inter-personal relationships. Of all human relationships, the parent/child relationship is subjected to the greatest degree of adjustment and change. The child's reaching out for emotional and physical independence places a strain on his relationship with his parents, a strain which is further intensified by the pressures of social change. Few among Hardy's characters are able to cope successfully with those strains and pressures.

At the same time as traditional beliefs and values were being undermined by formal learning and by Victorian religious instruction, a superficial morality, concentrating upon external appearances, gained in importance. Respectability was the catchword of this value system and regulation of overt behaviour its primary concern. The second chapter of my thesis contrasts this very limited moral vision with the more serious, ethically-directed view and exa-

mines the very different impact each may have upon the family relationships in Hardy's novels. Of these two value judgements, the pre-occupation with conventionality and respectability is the one associated more closely with socially and economically based ambitions. When the onus of achieving those ambitions falls principally upon the younger generation, conforming social behaviour by the child usually indicates a commitment to the same goals as those of the parents. Conversely, any questioning by the child of those conventional values and all attempts to come to grips with a more complex moral code meet at best incomprehension, at worst outright antagonism. Tess Durbeyfield is faced with this range of reactions, in part from her immediate family and also from the community at large. As a result of the moral issues and dilemmas which loom so large in Tess of the d'Urbervilles and because the implications of Tess's convictions are so far-reaching, the novel warrants special consideration. It is therefore discussed at length in the second chapter, with a view to determining the nature of the relationship between Tess and her parents, and that between Tess and the outside world.

In the final chapter the broad issue of morality is narrowed down to the two moral attributes peculiar to the family situation - parental responsibility and filial obedience. Hardy explores, in a number of novels, the ramifications of each. Consistent inadequacies and failings on the part of the parent may warp the child's mind until like Father Time

in Jude the Obscure he becomes capable only of abnormal reactions and responses. No matter how horrifying this child's actions may seem they are presented as the logical outcome of an upbringing, marked by parental neglect. Parental failure is also central to The Mayor of Casterbridge where Michael Henchard's initial act of abdicating his responsibilities is dramatised as spectacularly as the calamitous result of Father Time's deprived childhood. When Henchard is provided with a second opportunity to redeem himself as a father, it is to little avail. Swinging between over-possessiveness and total avoidance of responsibility, Henchard displays no more parenting skills than he had eighteen years previously, and only Elizabeth's maturity and sensible, responsible attitude to life enable her to remain largely unaffected by her stepfather's erratic behaviour. The actions of Henchard and of Jude and Arabella constitute, in effect, a denial of their children's basic entitlement - the right to be loved and cherished.

Obedience in The Mayor of Casterbridge and in a number of other novels inevitably focusses upon the choice of a prospective husband for the heroine. The possibilities for an intense and bitter family conflict exist, but generally Hardy's young women are reluctant to defy their parents in this matter. When her parents' candidate is not the man of her own choosing she will attempt, with varying degrees of success, to win them over to her point of view. Ethelberta Petherwin's refusal to allow herself to be influenced by her

father's opposition to Mountclere (The Hand of Ethelberta) is one of the few acts of outright defiance by a Hardy heroine. Its significance, however, is reduced by Chickerel's inability, socially or economically, to exercise any real paternal authority over his daughter and by Ethelberta's taking upon herself the role, typically adopted by the father, of guiding and directing the family's fortunes. Hardy's great novel of filial disobedience is, without question, The Return of the Native. Because obedience is so incumbent upon the child, feelings of guilt are likely to accompany any act of defiance. In Clym's case, the consequences of that disobedience are tragic, and guilt turns into a remorse which overwhelms his mind and renders him incapable of rational thought and dispassionate judgement. From this reaction it is possible to gain some clue to the singular nature of the family relationship. Choice, important to any meaningful outside relationship, is not a factor in a blood relationship. While friends, lovers, acquaintances can be chosen, and, if circumstances dictate, erased from memory parents, brothers and sisters cannot. As a result it is a relationship which although not reaching the emotional heights of an outside love relationship subjects its members to mutual accountability and interdependency. When that support is not forthcoming, in a relationship where the weaker may expect to lean on the stronger, the children upon their parents and the elderly upon the younger, the consequences can be far-reaching. These issues and dilemmas, which are raised in a number of Hardy's novels, are examined in the pages which follow.

CHAPTER 1

Reading, Writing and . . .

The concept of education as a dividing force can be seen to be a recurring thread throughout much of Hardy's work. It was inevitable that educational disparity should be felt most profoundly by those families belonging to lower socio-economic groups in areas like rural Dorset: areas where rural traditions were forced to yield before the intrusions of progress and modernisation, and where children, provided with the basic schooling denied to their parents, rejected all that the older generation had represented. For Hardy, the particularising and individualising effect that can be achieved through both poetry and the novel were generally sufficient to present the conflict brought about by changing attitudes to life. One exception, the essay entitled "The Dorsetshire Labourer", combines a plea for greater understanding of the problems facing the farming labourer and for an appreciation of his worthily individual qualities with a recognition of the inevitability and value of change. Nevertheless, the predominant tone is regret that traditional values will be lost in the wake of the physical upheaval arising out of the Lady Day migration, an annual dislocation which turned the agricultural worker into a transient labourer, and effectively severed any real link between himself and the land he worked. Other consequences of the impulse to move, whether or not occasioned by the Lady Day migration, were, on the surface, more desirable. The new mobility was accompanied by a broadening of experience and knowledge and by exposure to new ideas as the rural inhabitants became in-

troduced to the sophistication and complexity of a society rapidly becoming more industrialised and more urbanised. Adjustment, however, was not an easy matter. Some were unwilling, or unable, to give up values and customs that had been held for centuries; others, like Joey Chickerel in The Hand of Ethelberta, grabbed at everything the new lifestyle appeared to stand for, without discrimination or judgment, while an idealist, such as Jude Fawley, discovered the dream that learning would open doors closed to the illiterate rustic to be only a dream. Within families adaptation proceeded at different rates and parent/offspring relationships were strained as the ambitions of the younger generation, nourished by a formal education, clashed with an older, traditional way of life.

Objections to the spread of formal education were made on a number of grounds. One of the more reactionary views is that presented by Captain Vye in The Return of the Native when he, far from convinced that the lower classes were capable of receiving any benefit from learning to read and write, declares,

> "Ah, there's too much of that sending to school in these days! It only does harm. Every gatepost and barn's door you come to is sure to have some bad word or other chalked upon it by the young rascals: a woman can hardly pass for shame sometimes. If they's never been taught how to write they wouldn't have been able to scribble such villainy. Their fathers couldn't do it, and the country was all the better for it." (RN,II,1)

Rather more serious than Captain Vye's comic outburst were

statements made to Sir H. Rider Haggard in the course of his researches into the agricultural and social conditions in rural England during 1901 and 1902.[6] Several landowners expressed to Haggard the opinion that to keep a labouring class boy at school beyond the age of nine or ten only alienated him from country pursuits, especially those menial tasks normally allocated to one of his age and station. Although prepared to admit that there might be some value in a child learning to read, write and do arithmetic, they felt it essential that these skills be kept to a minimum and at a very basic level, as the uneducated labourer was more likely to be content with his lot than one who had acquired a degree of formal learning. However much Hardy might regret the loss of traditional knowledge and the increasing spirit of restlessness among the labouring classes, he never suggested the cure for the depopulation of the country-side lay in mass ignorance. Indeed, concern is expressed in "The Dorsetshire Labourer" at the very real injury inflicted upon a child's education by the Lady Day migration. As a result of this yearly uprooting the children's education "cannot possibly progress with that regularity which is essential to their getting the best knowledge in the short time available to them." Hardy's additional comment, "It is the remark of village school teachers of experience, that the children of the vagrant work-folk form the mass of those who fail to reach the ordinary standard of knowledge expected of their age"[7] would make it clear he is worried by an inadequate level

of education among these children, and not by the possibility of their work potential being limited by too much education.

Apart from the practical difficulties liable to be faced in trying to acquire formal tuition, a problem met and partially overcome by Jude Fawley, there were additional difficulties which were more traumatic in their effect. These frequently emerge in a Hardy novel as dilemmas of dislocation, and affect those trying to reconcile recently learnt values and expectations with older customs and standards. Of all Hardy's heroines, Tess Durbeyfield is the one whose life most completely exemplifies the turmoil and laceration arising from a conflict of this nature.

Tess, when the novel opens, has reached a curious median point in her development and in her educational accomplishments. Physically, she is neither child nor adult, while her sixth standard schooling seems to have left her stranded between the near illiterate villagers and the highly educated Angel Clares. There is an indication of the indeterminate nature of her situation in the passage in which we are told that she "spoke two languages: the dialect at home, more or less; ordinary English abroad and to persons of quality" (TD,3). Hardy's emphasis upon Tess's linguistic ability gains added significance when compared with a parallel situation, described in "The Dorsetshire Labourer". There, the well-meaning and thoughtful investigator into conditions in rural Dorset is informed that,

> He would, for one thing, find that the language, instead of being a vile corruption of cultivated speech, was a tongue with grammatical inflection rarely disregarded by his entertainer, though his entertainer's children would occasionally make a sad hash of their talk. Having attended the National School they would mix the printed tongue as taught therein with the unwritten, dying, Wessex English that they had learnt of their parents, the result of this transitional state of theirs being a composite language without rule or harmony.[8]

In Tess Durbeyfield's case Hardy's creative imagination has overruled what we must assume to be the more factual report of "The Dorsetshire Labourer". Clearly, his conception of the young Tess will not permit her to be one of those who make "a sad hash" of their speech, for it is important, if the tragedy of Tess's story is to be fully realized, that she be seen to have the potential to lead a life different from that of her mother. This involves, essentially, a breaking of the accepted pattern for a girl of her station: that of early marriage and endless pregnancy. Tess has this potential, and her proficiency in Standard English and her excellence in school are used as one of the means to distinguish her from the mass of farm labourers and workfolk.

As early as the club-walking, the occasion on which the reader meets Tess for the first time, Tess's equivocal position is emphasized. Her introduction as a participant in a centuries-old ritual that has retained only elements of its original form and none of its former meaning, allows Hardy to present his heroine with a degree of anonymity. She is merely one among many, all of whom are dressed in white frocks,

carrying flowers and peeled willow wands and who are finding pleasure in a community celebration. Just as the uniformity is a superficial impression, so is Tess's affinity with the group whose activities she shares. Teased by her companions over the drunkenness of John Durbeyfield, Tess responds with a display of defensive anger, giving evidence that she is ill at ease and self-conscious among the girls from her own village. Interestingly enough, this discomfiture appears to be a comparatively new development, for the reader is told that as a school-age child "she had been much loved by others of her own sex and age, and had used to be seen about the village as one of three - all nearly of the same year - walking home from school side by side . . . the arms of the two outside girls resting round the waist of Tess; her arms on the shoulders of the two supporters" (TD, 5).

To what extent Tess's inherent intelligence, aided by her sixth standard education, should be held responsible for setting Tess apart, even at this early stage of the novel, can only be guessed at; but it would appear that her mental development has been in the direction of a romantic idealism rather than along purely practical and realistic lines. Hand in hand with this idealism, and inseparable from it, is Tess's sexual innocence. As a result, she is quite unaffected by the wooing and winning which is the culmination of the club-walking, and a natural outcome of the link, suggested by Ruth Firor, between this particular festivity and the old Teutonic custom of choosing brides during May ceremonies.[9]

With this ironic juxtaposition of sexual innocence with fertility rites, an age-old ritual with the Victorian Revised Code of Education, the gaiety of a near obsolete ceremony with the harshness of the Durbeyfield's poverty-stricken existence, Hardy underlines the contrast between the real and the ideal. In time, Tess will make the same discovery for herself, but in this early part of the novel she still believes her hopes and dreams are likely to be fulfilled. Reality however, suggests that Tess is locked into the same cycle of poverty as her parents. Although she can temporarily put aside all thoughts of a drunken father and a prematurely aged mother, her actual prospects are, in truth, little better than theirs. Despite the promise she shows as a pupil, the chances of her substantially improving the family situation by her own unaided efforts are negligible. The more realistic and practical Joan Durbeyfield recognizes this fact only too clearly and while Tess dreamily yearns after the club-walking's well-spoken stranger and the life-style he represents, Joan's schemes to upgrade the Durbeyfields' material welfare involve the exploitation of Tess's beauty and innocence. Once again reality and ideality are juxtaposed by Hardy.

Education has weaned Grace Melbury (The Woodlanders) even further than Tess Durbeyfield from her rural heritage. The emancipated sophisticate who returns to Little Hintock is only too aware of the ironic contrast that exists between the genteel atmosphere of the boarding school she has left and

the unpretentious rusticity of her father's house. But although the conflicts faced by the two girls are fundamentally very similar Hardy has handled each in a rather different manner.

With Tess much of the tension is internal, and because of the closer ties with her rural background we see her, when suffering from mental pressure and strain, reverting to the superstitious beliefs and fatalistic attitudes of her parents. This means that it is often the small and seemingly insignificant incident - the afternoon-crowing cock (TD, 33) and the butter that will not come (TD, 21) - which gains in importance as Hardy uses these ill-omens, in conjunction with the more general pre-figurative imagery, to create a totality of tragic effect. The ill-omens also indicate the predisposition of Tess to the inevitability of a tragic fate. Some idea of the degree of subjectivity in Tess's recognition of ill-omens can be gained by a comparison between the superstitious beliefs of the mother and those of her daughter. No forewarning emerges from Joan's consultation with The Compleat Fortune-Teller, only confirmation of what Joan Durbeyfield expects to find there, and that, sanction of her scheme to repair the family's fortunes. Obviously, neither the ill or good omens will have any bearing on the outcome of events, but, and Hardy well understood this, the state of mind of the protagonists can have a considerable effect. Tess, even at her happiest, expects trouble ("'I don't quite feel easy. . . . This good fortune may be scourged out of me afterwards

by a lot of ill. That's how Heaven mostly does'" (TD, 32)) and resignation to misfortune, when it does come, follows inevitably.

The heroine of The Woodlanders, upon her return to Little Hintock, shows little evidence of any deep internal turmoil. Disappointment, yes, and regret at leaving what appears to her to be a superior way of life, but no paralysing, soul-tormenting conflict. The relative ease with which Grace will adjust to her father's, and Giles's, mode of existence is summed up by Mrs. Melbury's statement, "'[Grace] will be his wife, if you don't upset her notion that she's bound to accept him as an understood thing . . . she'll soon shake down here in Hintock, and be content with Giles's way of living'" (W, 11). There are two explanations for the ease of this transition. Firstly, Grace's disposition is so malleable that adjustment of any kind is relatively easy. This is precisely her father's fear, which prompts him to remark, "'I know Grace will gradually sink down to our level again, and catch our manners and way of speaking, and feel a drowsy content in being Giles's wife'" (W, 11). Secondly, while education has provided Grace with a veneer of sophistication it has not really changed the country girl underneath. As with all veneers, external appearance becomes of the utmost importance, and this is certainly true of reactions by and toward Grace in the early chapters of the novel. When Melbury sees his daughter for the first time upon her return to Little Hintock it is her physical features which over-

shadow all else.

> The fire was as before the only light, and it irradiated Grace's face and hands so as to make them look wondrously smooth and fair beside those of the two elders; shining also through the loose hair about her temples as sunlight through a brake. Her father was surveying her in a dazed conjecture, so much had she developed and progressed in manner and stature since he last had set eyes on her. (W, 6)

This scene has been prepared for by the episode in which Giles and Grace meet under the apple tree in the market place of Sherton Abbas (W, 5). At that time it is Giles, normally scornful of external appearances, who is forced to acknowledge that he may have damaged his own standing in the eyes of one who does value (and here it is hard to escape the notion of authorial judgment) what are called the "non-essentials" of life.

Throughout this novel education and these same non-essentials would appear to go hand in hand, with the greatest exponent of this combination as far as his own daughter is concerned being Melbury himself. Melbury reduces Grace's education to two basic elements - financial cost and social success. "'Hasn't it cost me near a hundred a year . . . to show an example to the neighbourhood of what a woman can be?'" (W, 12) As far as financial cost is concerned Melbury becomes a victim of his own tradesman mentality when he is unable to free himself from the conviction that Grace and her cultivation will be wasted if they are to be conferred upon Giles. In terms of social achievement Melbury considers he

has succeeded when the "freemasonry of education" (W, 7) will permit his daughter to meet and socialize with the Mrs. Charmonds of this world. Prizing unduly the educational polish acquired by his daughter, he makes value judgments upon city and rural life, rejecting the latter for its coarseness, lack of comfort and sophistication. Country virtues, especially that of hard, honest work, are spurned by Melbury as he envisages his daughter filling the role of society ornament. In all this rush for educational improvement human values tend to be submerged by "non-essentials" to such an extent that Hardy has Melbury in conversation, speaking of his own daughter, ascribe surprise to Mrs. Charmond that, "'Such an article . . . could come out of my house'" (W, 7). In effect, a person has been here reduced to the level of a "thing", and it may be assumed, from an analogy of this sort, one human being is treating another as a personal possession. It follows automatically, for possessions are rarely permitted to have feelings or desires of their own, that Melbury will bring pressure to bear upon Grace for her to give up Giles and his relatively humble status in life.

The extent to which Hardy deplored the treating of another human as a chattel to be owned and disposed of at will, or as an investment designed to show a profit, is indicated by the even more dramatic incident when Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge puts his wife up for sale, asking, "'Will any Jack Rag or Tom Straw among ye buy my goods?'"

(MC, 1) As in The Woodlanders people are reduced to the level of things, and human relationships to a matter of shillings and pence. Later, when the sale is over and Mrs. Henchard and Elizabeth-Jane have departed with Newson, Henchard will say, "'She'd no business to take the maid - 'tis my maid'" (MC, 1). There is no feeling of regret or repentance, only anger that Newson should have gone away with more than he had paid for. Unlike either Melbury or Henchard, Giles Winterborne (The Woodlanders) places too high a value on human worth to reduce human emotions and feelings to economic terms. Giles's attitude is clearly exemplified with his refusal to consider the monetary cost involved in losing Grace and his rebuke of Creedle for daring to suggest he should (W, 25).

Two very different reactions, yet ultimately both men experience the same fate - a lonely death that in some ways comes as a relief, ending as it does the suffering that has preceded it. Giles renounces all in his sacrifice of self, including any rights he may have had to Grace. To him is given a martyr's death. Henchard dies the repentent and outcast sinner, a tragic figure who more than any of Hardy's characters exemplifies the author's assertion that, "Tragedy should arise from the gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices and ambitions."[10] Unlike the saint-like Giles Winterborne, Henchard is throughout a prey to the passions, prejudices and ambition which lead eventually to his downfall. It is a fitting finale that

his epitaph, Henchard's Will, the final gesture of a man who has maintained a proprietary attitude to all those with whom he has had any sort of relationship - his wife, Elizabeth-Jane, Lucetta and Farfrae - should be basically a command that no-one, by thought, word or deed, is to make any claim to his now worthless body. Elizabeth's acceding to those wishes is further evidence, if any were needed at this late stage of the novel, of her total acceptance of the rights of others to be themselves and to maintain their own personal integrity.

Grace Melbury and Tess Durbeyfield have been able to achieve, initially by means of their education and later through marriage, a degree of upward social mobility. For them, as for Ethelberta Petherwin and Fancy Day, two more of Hardy's well-educated young women, social mobility has not been achieved without some physical mobility, and the difficulties of dislocation which they experience are one aspect of the very much wider problem of rural migration that interested and troubled Hardy for the greater part of his life. The effects of any disruption to an established way of life were bound to be felt most severely by the labouring agricultural class. It seems to matter little whether outside circumstances have forced an unwanted mobility upon a family, as is the case with the Durbeyfields who find themselves dispossessed after the death of "Sir" John, the third and last life-holder (TD, 50,51) or whether, as with Jude, mobility is actively sought in an effort to fulfil certain desires and

needs, the end result is the same; loss of place is almost inevitably accompanied by loss of a traditional way of life, of feeling for the land and of family and community ties.

For many, and this was especially true of the poor labourer, mobility was purely physical, consisting of migration from one farm to another, or, increasingly as the nineteenth century proceeded, from the country into the city to join the growing ranks of the urban poor. Although the motivation tended to be economic, the manner in which education helped to create a climate of dissatisfaction with rural existence should not be overlooked. H. Rider Haggard had no doubt that the town-oriented system of education, promoting an awareness of life beyond the village boundaries, had a large part to play in the depopulation of the English countryside and in the conclusion to his survey of rural England states, "The diffusion of newspapers, the system of Board school education, and the restless spirit of our age have changed [the rural labourer] so that now-a-days it is his main ambition to escape from the soil where he was bred and try his fortune in the cities."[11] While there appears to be no really fundamental divergence of opinion between Haggard and Hardy as to the consequences of the rural-dwellers' migration to the towns Hardy's non-fictional analyses look back to the period between 1850 and the 1880s and find insecurity of tenure to be the chief culprit. In both "The Dorsetshire Labourer" and in the letter quoted by Haggard[12] Hardy can be found attacking most vigorously the practice of forcing the

"liviers" from their cottages. Fictionally, this particular problem arises only in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and, for the most part, the rustics of Hardy's novels, firmly established in the rural setting, show little inclination to join the movement out of the villages and small towns into the cities. One exception to this generalization is The Hand of Ethelberta, a novel which does examine some of the difficulties of adjustment faced by recent arrivals in London, albeit within a framework of comedy.

But if the fictional rustics are relatively stable, those whose position in the social hierarchy is somewhat above that of the agricultural worker are not. These include the tenant farmer, the small businessman and the head gamekeeper, all of whom are able to command respect from the more humble villagers and whose expectations might reasonably encompass a basic education for their children. They are men who are anxious that the physical and social continuity of their own lives should not fall to the lot of their daughters; sons tend to be excluded because of the need for an experienced successor to take over the family farm or business. Further light is shed upon this social phenomenon by Richard Jefferies's contemporary portrait of Wiltshire during the eighteen-seventies, Hodge and His Masters. Jefferies points out that the education given to the female was aimed specifically at training her mind away from all associations of farming:

> Take twenty farmers' families, where there are girls, and out of that twenty fifteen will be found prepar-

> ing for a scholastic life. The farmer's daughter does not like the shop-counter, and, as she cannot stay at home, there is nothing left to her but the profession of governess. Once thoroughly imbued with these "social" ideas, and a return to the farm is almost impossible.[13]

The specific example provided by Jefferies is of a young lady Georgie Slade, whose father, a well established farmer, has spent large sums of money to ensure a good education for his daughter; first from the hands of a governess and then at a high-class academy. In spite of, or more probably because of, this expensive education Georgie finds, like Grace Melbury, that she is "in mid-air between two storeys of society", (W, 30) despising the rough simplicity of her father's house and rejected, except in the role of governess to their children, by those whose company she seeks. Georgie's brother, on the other hand, would appear to have escaped this expensive and exclusive education, and he is presented to the reader as a young farmer, at ease with rural habits and ways, and uncomfortable in the presence of his refined and sophisticated sister.

The preponderance of only children amongst Hardy's heroes and heroines adds to the difficulty of making positive statements about consistent educational differentiation, according to sex, within the families of his novels. Only in The Hand of Ethelberta and Tess of the d'Urbervilles is it possible to find exceptions to the "small family" generalization, and in both these novels the pattern of differentiation that has been described, does occur, if not totally, then cer-

tainly to a significant degree. Ethelberta, the heroine of the former novel, has received extensive schooling as a child and, until her secret marriage to the son of Sir Ralph Petherwin, was the governess to the young daughter of the Petherwin household. Furthermore, Ethelberta's career, at least as far as the educational side of it is concerned, is in the process of being emulated by the younger sister, Picotee who holds a post as pupil-teacher when the novel opens. It is soon made clear, however, that not all members of the Chickerel family have received an equivalent amount of schooling. The two eldest sisters are virtually uneducated and like their father have gone into service. Two of the three brothers are earning their living as tradesmen, while the third, Joey, begins his work life as a page in the employ of his sister. The eventual rise in Joey's prospects (at the very end of the novel we are told that he is likely to become a parson) does little to add to the caricature of a jumped-up country boy that has already been presented. And the manner in which it is suggested, by Mrs. Chickerel stating the suitability of this career for Joey because of the boy's interest in mythological love stories, would appear to represent an attempt on the part of Hardy to have one final poke, before the novel ends, at the clergy in general. The existence of the remarks may however be justified as an ironic last comment on the way in which Mrs. Chickerel's former common sense and practicality have degenerated during the three or so years of urban living.

Two only sons who are provided with an advanced form of schooling and for whom education creates problems between themselves and their mothers are Randolph Twycott ("The Son's Veto") and Clym Yeobright (The Return of the Native). In the short story the educational and class structure lines are established firmly and rigidly, as are the personalities of the two main characters. A very unpleasant and heartless young man, Randolph Twycott has little to recommend him. His mother, on the other hand, is a tentative, unassuming woman who displays a kind heart and true affection and loyalty toward her son and husband. The possibility that these virtues arise from her lower class rural origins is unstated but would seem to be very real, especially as Sam Hobson, with a similar background possesses those same qualities of loyalty and affection.

In this story education has much to answer for, being held directly responsible for Randolph's hardheartedness. "His education had by this time sufficiently ousted his humanity to keep him quite firm" ("The Son's Veto" in Life's Little Ironies). We must assume however that the fault lies not so much with education itself as with a social system too impressed with superficial appearances and valuing too highly certain accomplishments, among these latter the education considered appropriate for a gentleman. The extravagant lunches at Lords are one symptom of this value system, and another can be seen in the elaborate hairdos of Sophy Twycott. At the level of superficial appearances Sophy would appear to

be the genteel lady. She is aware however that her birth and her manner of speaking, in effect her education, cut her off from the society of her husband and son. She is thus totally dislocated, unable to enter the world of her son and prevented, by that selfsame son, from rejoining, through marriage to Sam Hobson, the class to which she truly belongs.

The tragedy of "The Son's Veto" is that the roles of parent and child have become reversed and it is the mother who bows to the authority of her son. This fundamental situation, in which the educated child dominates the uneducated parent, is essentially that which occurs in The Hand of Ethelberta. In that novel, though, very little time is spent portraying the attitude of the Chickerel parents to their daughter's interference in, and organization of, their lives. Additionally, this interference is also tempered by the knowledge that Ethelberta is motivated by a concern for her parents' welfare, whereas the sole motivation in Randolph's case is concern that his own position should be in no way jeopardized by his mother's actions. The ironic last touch, that this young man who is totally lacking in human compassion should have followed his father's footsteps and entered the priesthood, is a fitting footnote in a way that Joey Chickerel's accession to the same position is not.

Clym Yeobright (The Return of the Native) is an idealistic young man whose early career in many respects parallels that of the young Hardy. Like Hardy he abandons a job which

seems unfulfilling in order to take on work answering some inner complusion. "A life twisted of three strands . . . the professional life, the scholar's life, and the rustic life,"[14] although an autobiographical comment could just as appropriately be applied to Yeobright, who, successful in Paris, continues to feel the pull of his native Egdon Heath. For Hardy and his fictional hero the Dorset countryside acts as a physical and spiritual haven from the turmoil of the metropolis, be it Paris or London. One further link between the author and the character of his imagination is that the initial drive toward learning is provided by the mother who in each case seems "ambitious on his account not her own."[15] It is tempting to see in this push toward academic achievement a transfer of the mother's frustrated hopes and dreams for herself onto the figure of her son.

In its emotional power and in the degree of conflict, the relationship between Clym and his mother would seem to have more in common with a turbulent love affair than with an ordinary family quarrel. For this reason, A.J. Guerard's comment that, "Man projects his ego into space, that is into timeless ideal illusion; women maintains her ego in society and time,"[16] although, specifically an explanation of the marriage breakdowns in Hardy's fiction, is particularly appropriate to the Yeobright family situation. At the root of the dissension between mother and son lies a diverging value system, with the initial discord centring upon the question of education and its ultimate purposes.

Yeobright has dreams of opening the minds of simple country folk to intellectual wisdom and understanding. The mother's intuitive understanding of her son's idealism vies with her realistic and worldly attitude to education. In judging education to be an important instrument in the guaranteeing of affluence and social status her position would seem to have much in common with that of Grace's father in The Woodlanders. The resemblance is, however, only superficial, for Melbury's aspirations are contingent upon social mobility in a way that Mrs. Yeobright's are not. If social mobility were not a fact of life Grace would not have received her fashionable education, nor would her father have been able to consider the possibility of his daughter's advancement, hand in hand with that education. At the same time as it is acknowledged that social mobility is not a factor in the Yeobright situation it is important to recognize its lack of relevance is the result of deliberate intent on the part of the author. Research by John Paterson has indicated a shift of emphasis between the early editions and the 1895 edition of the text as a result of which financial considerations replace social considerations in Mrs. Yeobright's mind. Typical of the alterations made by Hardy is the remark, "'You might have been a gentleman if you had only persevered'",[17] which is changed in the later edition to "'You might have been a wealthy man if you had only persevered" (RN, III, 2). Alterations like this, arising out of the author's decision to lift the Yeobrights higher in the social scale, stress Mrs.

Yeobright's belief that she and her son already possess a social superiority which is independent of their financial standing.

Free of any dependence upon social mobility and freed from the restraints imposed by social effort, Clym is at liberty to indulge his idealistic notions. For Mrs. Yeobright, however, the situation is not as clear-cut. Social effort may not be required of her, but maintenance of genteel standards continues to be of the utmost importance, with the result that this extraordinary woman, who oscillates between an astute perspicacity and a preoccupation with conventional repectability, appears as a figure combining complexity with superficiality. Her stand on the question of Thomasin's wedding is characteristic in that the initial refusal to allow the ceremony to take place seems to be prompted by Mrs. Yeobright's "singular insight into life" (RN, III, 3) which has permitted her to recognize the very real shortcomings in Wildeve's character. Once Thomasin has been placed in a compromising position by the licence mix-up (RN, I, 5) Mrs. Yeobright will submerge those doubts about Wildeve and use every means at her disposal to ensure that the marriage does take place.

In spite of the underhand methods adopted by Mrs. Yeobright, methods that Hardy labels "The Dishonesty of an Honest Woman" (RN, I, 11 - Chapter Heading), there can be little doubt that the author intended his reader to see Mrs.

Yeobright as more than a narrow-minded, scheming woman whose main concern is with her own good name. The narrative voice insists that, despite her isolated and relatively sheltered existence, Mrs. Yeobright manages to be one of those "who, without clear ideas of the things they criticize, have yet had clear ideas of the relations of those things" (RN, III, 3). Seemingly, it is this talent which enables her, unaided by previous exposure to philosophical thought, to realize the fearful practical shortcomings of Clym's aspirations and, simultaneously, to recognize the values inherent in these ideals and their importance to her son. Mrs. Yeobright's arrival at this point has not been easy. A proclivity to judge in terms of financial and social success has had to break down in the face of Clym's outlook on life as Mrs. Yeobright finds herself drawn, almost against her will, over to her son's way of thinking. There is a certain inevitability, therefore, about her refusal to reply to the question posed by Clym, "'Mother, what is doing well?'" - an inevitability somewhat weakened by Hardy's own explanation that "Mrs. Yeobright was far too thoughtful a woman to be content with ready definitions" (RN, III, 2). This authorial remark helps little, except as a further reminder of the narrator's position with regard to Mrs. Yeobright. It is, on the other hand, more satisfactory to see this refusal to reply as arising out of a genuine doubt in Mrs. Yeobright's mind as to the validity of the answer which, given her earlier remarks, might be expected of her; namely the desirability of material suc-

cess as a goal for her son. In effect Clym's first convert, Mrs. Yeobright achieves a level of understanding that will be denied to Clym by the natives of Egdon Heath.

Those rustics, upon whom the spread of culture is intended to have its greatest effect, view Clym and his plans with profound mistrust and scepticism. Traditional doubts about "do-gooders" which elicit the response, "'Tis good-hearted of the young man. . . . But for my part, I think he had better mind his business,'" (RN, III, 1) are joined to inflexible opinions on the fate of those who pursue a course of learning. Too much schooling, too soon is considered to be responsible for turning Clym into "'a real perusing man, with the strangest notions about things,'" (RN, II, 1) a pronouncement upon education that is to reappear, with slight modifications, in The Woodlanders, where the rustic illiterates are quite vocal about the harm that Melbury is doing to his daughter by keeping her at school. Far from allowing Grace to cope with the world around her, it is feared that education will cause her to become "'as nesh as her mother was,'" (W, 4) thereby establishing, not only the uselessness of learning, but also the dangers accompanying it. To these rural dwellers, struggling to eke out a day-to-day existence for themselves and their families, everything, including education, tends to be judged according to its practical worth. Some form of escape is allowable, even desirable, but only as long as the "play" does not interfere with the "work", a distinction which the young Jude fails to observe

and is roundly criticized for when he attempts to combine reading with the delivery of bread (JO, I, 5). If further proof were required by the Marygreen villagers of the worthlessness of education it is provided by Jude's confession to them that lack of money has prevented his admission to a college (JO, II, 6). Dedication has not been enough, and when judged in terms of an ability to gain practical rewards from the knowledge that has been acquired with so much difficulty, Jude stands, in the eyes of the rustic illiterates as much of a failure as Clym a fool, for his abandonment of a successful and financially rewarding career.

In both Jude the Obscure and The Return of the Native these two opposing attitudes, the practical realism of the rustic who confines himself to the basics of existence and the unrealistic idealism of him who aspires to intellectual achievement or to the enlightenment of mankind, are deliberately brought into sharp contrast. By means of this juxtaposition Hardy is able to present two extremes of attitude which throw into relief, without comment, the shortcomings of the other. One such exchange occurs in Jude the Obscure, as Jude and the villagers discuss the merits of the city of Christminster.

> "The 'City of Light' you used to talk to us about as a little boy! Is it all you expected of it?"
> "Yes; more!" cried Jude.
> "When I was there once for an hour I didn't see much in it for my part; auld crumbling buildings, half church, half alms-house, and not much going on at that."

> "You are wrong, John; there is more going on than meets the eye of a man walking through the streets. It is a unique centre of thought and religion - the intellectual and spiritual granary of this country. All that silence and absence of goings-on is the stillness of infinite motion - the sleep of the spinning-top, to borrow the simile of a well-known writer."
> "O, well, it med be all that, or it med not. As I say, I didn't see nothing of it the hour or two I was there; so I went in and had a pot o' beer, and a penny loaf, and a ha'porth o'cheese, and waited till it was time to come along home." (JO, II, 6)

The two attitudes are quite irreconcilable. It is clear that the rural inhabitants will never be brought to an understanding of the significance learning holds for Jude, especially since Jude seems to be incapable of expressing himself in a manner that might be comprehensible to the uneducated mind; nor is there any desire on the part of Jude to consider that the point of view offered by the villagers, although so antithetic to his own beliefs, may be a corrective to his particular brand of idealism. Beer, bread and cheese, so important to the country labourer, are relegated by Jude to the baser, unwanted side of his personality; the side which, in spite of attempts at repression, will, at certain intervals throughout the novel, come to the fore.

In discussing the question of education and the English lower socio-economic classes during the middle and late Victorian period one element remains constant - that the younger generation received more formal learning than their parents. The results of this situation were less predictable but generally there tended to be a negative effect upon the family

structure as the child whose ideas and hopes widened to embrace a more expansive horizon than the relatively stable world of his parents would draw away from that world, looking back on it with shame, embarrassment, scorn and sometimes, though rarely, through a haze of idealism. Those of Hardy's characters who follow this path show to varying degrees, one or more of these states. Additionally their careers reflect a pattern which is essentially that of their creator. Hardy's formal education outdistanced that of his parents even when he was quite a young boy. To be sure his mother was an avid reader who awakened and encouraged her son's interest in literature[18] but in so doing she wittingly or unwittingly deepened the educational gulf between the Hardy parents and their eldest son. Robert Gittings,[19] remarking on the reverence displayed by Hardy towards learning and the sense of ease and familiarity he experienced in the company of the educated, has contrasted this attitude with the author's general discomfiture in the presence of those who belonged to the way of life he had left behind. In the light of such comments the inability of Jude and Clym to communicate with the rustic figures from whom both had hoped to win some sort of understanding becomes more poignant as we realize that the dilemma of these two characters is also the dilemma of their creator. And it is the dilemma so often faced by those who aspire to reach educationally and socially beyond the confines of their parents' world.

CHAPTER 2

A Matter of Morality

Perhaps more than any other single term "morality" has come to typify the Victorian era and its ideals. Conventional Victorian morality, with its emphasis upon gentility, prudery and upon a well-defined code of behaviour, appears today to stand for the facet of Victorianism most open to reproach. Essentially a superficial morality, because of its regulation of overt behaviour, it was of particular importance to the middle-class. Just as adherence to a code of sexual behaviour was proof of virtue, so conformity with the social niceties of convention was indisputable proof of respectability. The deeper, more serious level of morality took, and still takes, no regard of social pretensions, social aspirations or level of education. Rather, it involves an individual sense of right and wrong and of where responsibilities and duties lie. Often this sense can be at odds with accepted conventions and with the teachings of formal education and religion. When it is, loyalty to this personal code can be fraught with difficulty. All the more so, in an age when discipline tended to be imposed from without and when attempts to question the well-established dictum that virtue will be rewarded and vice punished received the severest censure.

In Hardy's novels both the superficialities of conventional morality and the more profound personal convictions have their place. Some of the more serious family conflicts arise out of the child's determination to follow the dictates of his conscience, although these may not be in accord with the more conventional beliefs of his parents. The concern

with social niceties is generally a less serious aspect of the novels, but its recurrence suggests that it may be an issue which teased and bothered Hardy. For this reason and for the light it sheds upon the parent/child relationships, Hardy's treatment of conventional morality warrants close scrutiny.

Responsibility for maintaining middle-class standards of refinement and respectability fell for the most part upon Victorian women. None of Hardy's female characters is as preoccupied with household appearances as the second Mrs. Day (Under the Greenwood Tree). Her determination to replace, because of Dick's presence, the tablecloth, cutlery and teapot (UGT, II, 6) is essentially a comic episode in the novel but the incident directs attention to a foible common to many of Hardy's older womenfolk. Social conformity requires an absolute obedience to the rules and regulations which have come to be accepted as proper behaviour. Those who adhere rigidly to such rules lose the ability to make independent judgements as they submit slavishly to the opinions of their neighbours and friends. This is certainly true of Mrs. Day. She is in trepidation lest her reputation as a housekeeper be tarnished. It is significant that the threat to this reputation comes from women whose standards, if Mrs. Day is to be believed, are very much lower than her own. As social conformity takes so little regard of the credentials of those who presume to judge, an ever-present threat in the shape of gossip can be seen to rule the lives and actions of any woman

consciously trying to assert or improve her social position. The gossip is heeded because affirmation of social superiority must be declared through overt behaviour. Mrs. Day has a number of reasons for feeling superior to her neighbours - her husband is a gamekeeper with at least one man under him, her step-daughter has been extensively educated and the family appears to be relatively secure in financial terms. Nevertheless, it is by showing herself as the exemplary housewife that she provides to the neighbours and herself indisputable proof of that superiority.

Fear of being the subject of gossip and the compulsion to conform experienced by Mrs. Day tend to be less in evidence among the younger generation. Fancy's social standing, because of her father's wealth and her own education, is relatively secure. It is improbable that this position could be maintained if she were guilty of immoral conduct, but her standing is secure enough to allow her to ignore many of the more minor restrictions of social conformity. She defies the tradition governing hair-styles considered appropriate for school mistresses, and unmindful of the gossip her actions will produce, revels in the attention she is thus able to gain (UGT, IV, 5). Housekeeping standards, too, receive from Fancy the scantest of attention except when they can be used to assert her authority over Dick - "'We always use kettle-holders'" (UGT, II, 7) - or when the absence of those standards would seem to threaten the relationship developing between herself and Maybold (UGT, II, 7). Reluctant on this

latter occasion to be caught without proper preparation, Fancy emphatically rejects Dick's suggestion (arising out of her complaint about the lack of visitors) that the vicar be invited to call. When, despite these protestations, Fancy is faced with Maybold's arrival she is quick to turn the situation to her own advantage. Making the most of the vicar's willingness to oblige, she puts him to work, a move which by its singularity and daring sets her apart from the villagers.

For their part the village folk are so daunted by Maybold that his presence generates an atmosphere of tension and disquiet. And the more insecure and self-conscious the villagers become, the greater the attention to their manners and the more formalized their speech. The "earnest and prolonged wiping of shoes" (UGT, II, 4) which precedes the choir's interview with the vicar and the resolute politeness of the interview itself arise from their discomfiture, in turn a response to their sense of social inferiority. Nor are the Mellstock women any less unnerved than their menfolk by the vicar's presence: Mrs. Penny finds her housekeeping routine upset by the fact that the vicar is prone to make unexpected calls (UGT, II, 2). It is important to Mrs. Penny, and all the villagers, that the vicar's dignity and their own should not be exposed to the embarrassment of being caught in the midst of menial labour. Only Fancy has the self-confidence and education to bridge the gap separating Maybold from his parishioners. Looking beyond the office to the man himself, she acts naturally and spontaneously, unhampered by formality

or convention. This attitude is not shared by Dick. He is careful to maintain the deference due to the vicar, a deference that shows him more attuned to the traditional attitudes of his elders than the more advanced notions of Fancy.

As well as ignoring certain established social values Fancy makes some attempt to introduce new standards of gentility. In this area she meets with limited success only. The traditional marriage ritual is too entrenched to allow the bride's modern ideas to prevail, and in the end Fancy's wishes to dispense with the march around the parish and for the bridesmaids to walk arm in arm with each other are overruled (UGT, V, 1). She is more successful in her insistence upon white gloves and in discouraging the use of rustic idiom and mannerisms, although it is a success that is likely to be temporary. Once Fancy directs her modernizing zeal elsewhere, the villagers will no doubt revert to their old ways; ways that bring with them the comfort of well-established tradition. Ultimately, however, Fancy's new ways will prevail. The force of change will prove too strong to be resisted as the rising generation reject their parent's beliefs and customs with such labels as "old-fashioned", "inelegant" and even on some occasions as "improper".

Although Fancy is generally unsuccessful when she attempts to "refine" the villagers her efforts throw into relief a development apparent in some parent/child relationships. Fancy's schooling, as well as that of Grace Melbury

(The Woodlanders), has opened the door to social mobility because it has allowed each girl to feel at ease in the company of her social superiors. In consequence of this advantage over their parents a devolution of authority may take place in which the older generation defer in social matters to the superior knowledge of their children. For Anne Garland (The Trumpet-Major) and Ethelberta Petherwin (The Hand of Ethelberta) even more is involved than authority in social concerns. Ethelberta's drive for wealth and fame and Anne's determination to maintain her family's social standing ensure, especially in the absence of any real ambition on the part of either Mrs. Garland or the elder Chickerels, that the manners and actions of the two girls are more parental than filial.

Throughout The Trumpet-Major Anne is presented as a strong-willed girl, very much in control of herself and careful to maintain all the proprieties. By and large, Mrs. Garland accepts Anne's opinions, albeit somewhat grudgingly on occasions, and defers to the girl's judgments. However the mother does admit to a certain helplessness when it comes to managing her daughter and, to compensate for her shortcomings in this area, is prepared to resort to the devious. Her encouragement of Festus Derriman, despite Anne's refusal to consider him as a possible suitor, falls into this category. Anne's domination may be attributed primarily to a forceful personality which permits her to override a vacillating and rather flighty mother. Nevertheless, the effects of Anne's schooling should not be overlooked, all the more

since she has been educated to a degree which causes Bob Loveday to consider himself, both scholastically and socially, her inferior (TM, 22). It is highly probable, therefore, that some educational disparity exists between mother and daughter, as a result of which Mrs. Garland may be classed among those parents who yield to the authority and superior knowledge of their better educated offspring.

After her mother's marriage to Miller Loveday Anne loses much of her influence as the driving force behind the Garland household. Many of the responsibilities which were Anne's do fall to Miller Loveday, but the major reason for the diminuation of Anne's authority appears to be the new Mrs. Loveday's willingness to abandon the girlish behaviour which had made her seem so much younger than her daughter. The woman who had been so reluctant to curb her natural enthusiasm for the sake of decorum and who had "screamed" down the stairs to Miller Loveday, "'I shall be down in a minute'" (TM, 3), is transformed into a subdued and rather sedate matron. Marriage brings other changes to Mrs. Loveday. As she becomes less dependent upon her daughter for reassurance and direction she gains enough self-assertion to reassume the maternal role abandoned earlier. Anne, for her part, seems glad to accept the protective attitude (TM, 36) and the greater astuteness and awareness (TM, 24, 26, 35) now displayed by her mother. The girl's earlier role, which had not been an easy one, had generated some resentment in her - "When the two Lovedays and Mrs. Garland were gone, Anne bolted the door

for security, and sat down to think again on her grave responsibilities in the choice of a husband, now that her natural guardian could no longer be trusted" (TM, 11). Mrs. Loveday's reassuming of that responsibility takes much of the weight off Anne's shoulders, at a time too, when Anne's experiences permit her to appreciate the world of difference which exists between pronouncing upon socially acceptable behaviour and deciding upon a husband.

When Fancy Day writes to Maybold that it is her nature, and perhaps that of all women, "to be ever fascinated with the idea of surroundings more elegant and pleasing than those which have been customary" (UGT, IV, 7), she is alluding to the link between gentility and financial status. The two terms are by no means synonymous. Even without money genteel standards may, with a degree of ingenuity, be maintained. Evidence of one such stratagem is provided with Mrs. Garland's efforts to camouflage her stone floor with "double carpeting, lest the standing of Anne and herself should be lowered in the public eye" (TM, 2). The purpose of the carpeting is to change the appearance, but not the substance of the floor. With financial resources the same effect can be achieved on a much grander scale, a scale which is bound to impress those who judge by external appearances alone.

Mrs. Charmond's money enables her to create at Hintock House a facade of refinement (The Woodlanders). As Grace and her father stand in awe before this display of elegant luxury

they allow their assessment of Mrs. Charmond's character to be coloured by the external evidence of her wealth. The question asked of Grace by her father, "'What did you think of the inside of Hintock House the other day?'" (W, 11) permits Melbury to point out the very obvious contrast between Mrs. Charmond's mansion and the humble cottage in which Winterborne lives. The comparison, prompted by Giles's ill-fated dinner party, shows the extent to which Melbury's judgments and perceptions have been distorted by material ambitions for his daughter. Giles, because of his lack of social graces, his limited financial resources and his old-fashioned country ways, has become in Melbury's eyes an unsuitable candidate for Grace's hand. It is a judgment based entirely on external appearances and which ignores the strength of character, honesty and conscientiousness which Melbury knows Winterborne to possess. The same distorted perception allows Melbury to view Grace's friendship with the flighty, self-centred, but well-to-do Mrs. Charmond, as most desirable and worthy of encouragement. In the middle of this tug-of-war is Grace, willing to judge Giles's dinner party and Giles himself with sympathy and compassion, yet not certain enough of the unimportance of material possessions to oppose her father's wishes.

The line between conventionally "proper" and "improper" behaviour (as opposed to moral and immoral behaviour which will be discussed later) is open to a degree of subjective interpretation and, as has already been stated, to modifica-

tion by changing customs and manners. Elizabeth-Jane Newson (The Mayor of Casterbridge) crosses this line when she offers her services in exchange for a reduction in the cost of accommodation (MC, 7). Although the decision of mother and daughter to stay at an inn beyond their financial means has been prompted by their desire for respectability, Elizabeth commits a social blunder with her offer of help. Not so much from the nature of the job itself, for the Christmas party in The Return of the Native sees Mrs. Yeobright and Clym waiting upon their inferiors with no lessening of the Yeobright's social status, but because of the payment, whether in money or in kind, which Elizabeth receives. Henchard's immediate reaction, upon learning much later of the incident, is to deny payment was expected, stating Elizabeth-Jane "'must have had more charity than sense'" (MC, 20). His anger, when told that not even this defence of her actions can be made, undoubtedly owes much to the disappointment of discovering that the girl is Newson's natural daughter and not his own. Nevertheless, Elizabeth's actions have struck the Mayor in a particularly sensitive area.

Henchard is fiercely protective of his position and rank in Casterbridge. His rise to the office of Mayor has been achieved, without any advantage of birth, in a town where, "vast political, religious, and social differences . . . [separate the inhabitants] like iron grills" (MC, 6). In order to overcome the barriers to upward social mobility and to retain his civic post it has been essential for Henchard

to present and maintain an exemplary public facade, neither breaking accepted conventions nor acting in a manner demeaning to his dignity. However, his violently negative reaction to Elizabeth's supposed social gaffes is basically the overreaction of a man haunted by his humble origins. Attempts to forget the past only intensify and reinforce the guilt and humiliation of Henchard's early life. Because the wife-selling episode is linked so inexorably to his experiences as a menial agricultural worker, to the poverty and resentment which accompanied that life, his former occupation has been kept as secret from the Casterbridge people as the event which took place in the furmity tent (MC, 1). The silence has not been easy and the impulsive relating to Farfrae of his history (MC, 12) provides some indication of the intolerable mental pressure under which the Mayor lives. Henchard's response to Elizabeth's venture into waitressing involves, therefore, more than anger at her contravention of the socially accepted norms of Casterbridge society. Her actions appear to invalidate all the anguish and turmoil which have been the price of his success. They invalidate the bitterness of poverty and the misery of subjugation during that time when the most promising future facing the Henchard family was a life spent in service.

Despite Henchard's condemnation of his stepdaughter's actions at the inn, the arrangement between the girl and the landlady is one "not uncommon in country villages" even if "well-nigh obsolete" in Casterbridge (MC, 7). The episode

can thus be seen to be one of many in this novel where traditional and modern values are found in conflict with each other. On the one side is Henchard, who, whether motivated by a desire to conform, by pride or by a genuine belief in "modern" attitudes, slavishly adheres to Casterbridge's interpretation of socially acceptable standards. In sharp contrast to this attitude is that found in Elizabeth-Jane. Although she belongs to the age group most likely to respond to new ideas and values, Elizabeth is inclined toward the traditionalism and unpretentiousness of her mother, and at the same time displays an independence of thought with which she judges Casterbridge values. As a result she finds herself in a curiously isolated position; the world of her childhood and of her mother has become more remote, but that of Henchard is subject to her misgivings about its worth and durability. When, for example, Elizabeth finds herself drawn into Casterbridge's parade of fashion and flattered by the attention care to her appearance and wardrobe engenders, she is quick to temper that satisfaction, "'It is the first time in my life that I have been so much admired,'" with the remark, "'perhaps it is by those whose admiration is not worth having'" (MC, 15). With these thoughts Elizabeth's independence of mind and the sense of isolation which accompanies such independence are established.

Practicality and commonsense may dictate Elizabeth's reactions to Casterbridge values but defiance is not part of her nature. Nevertheless, her natural enthusiasm and willing-

ness to help take her across the artificial boundaries of decorum adhered to by Victorian society. She dances with Farfrae because she enjoys the Scotsman's company (MC, 16), runs because she is excited (MC, 17), on occasions lapses into dialect (MC, 20) and out of tenderness of heart brings food and drink to one of her father's employees (MC, 20). In themselves these transgressions are very minor, if indeed they may be considered transgressions at all. They become serious because of Henchard's use of these episodes to unleash some of his own pent-up frustrations. In the mental substitution that takes place, Henchard's spurning of Susan's daughter is directed toward the superficial aspects of her conduct. The real reason for this rejection is Henchard's inability to accept, as his daughter, a girl with whom he has no blood-link. These scenes are handled by Hardy with a great deal of psychological realism and the area chosen by Henchard to vent his rage is particularly appropriate. A person of Henchard's temperament would undoubtedly feel stifled by the constraints of Victorian conventionality. As pressure mounts some form of release becomes essential and it is inevitable that the Mayor should lash out at his nearest victim and at her apparent breaches of decorum. These episodes provide a much stronger indictment of Victorian respectability than the peculiarities displayed by Mrs. Geoffrey Day. The disappointed Henchard becomes so obsessed with the facade of propriety he is unable to see the qualities of genuine feeling and concern possessed by Elizabeth. For her part, Elizabeth-Jane is

torn between her natural humanitarianism and the many petty restrictions to which her behaviour is subject. Basically a girl of personal integrity she has no need of the rigid code which seeks to regulate all forms of overt behaviour at the expense of more serious moral considerations.

On a number of occasions respectability and refinement are found hand in hand with education. Elizabeth, who notes and praises this combination of qualities in Farfrae, describes the Scotsman as "'so respectable, and educated - far above the rest of 'em in the inn.'" Excusing Farfrae's lack of familiarity with rustic ways, she adds further, he is "'too refined in his mind to know such things!'" (MC, 8). In The Woodlanders a similar link is established but taken a step further to include ethical standards. Although Fitzpiers is without the financial means available to Mrs. Charmond he is still able to command the respect of Grace and her father. Possessing two advantages denied to Mrs. Charmond the doctor's social superiority is clearly established by his lineage and by his educational accomplishments. Of these two attributes only the second is held by Grace to be of any real account. She is drawn to the spiritual, intellectual side of Fitzpiers and sees there the basis for their future relationship. In the flush of courtship she envisages, and is charmed by, "the possibilities of a refined and cultivated inner life, of subtle psychological intercourse" (W, 23). With this view, education is granted the power of allowing the mind to rise above the less acceptable aspects of life - aspects ranging

from the crass materialism of the economically successful to the coarseness of lower-class existence, and also include the moral weakness to which man is prey.

When Grace assumes that an educated man will also espouse high ethical principles her belief proves, in Fitzpiers' case, to be totally incorrect. Her error arises not because the assumption is necessarily illogical, but because Fitzpiers is a member of an aristocracy regarded by Hardy as decadent and immoral. Elsewhere in Hardy's novels the educated man whose origins are less aristocratic than Fitzpiers' can be found pursuing what purports to be the morally unimpeachable course, and expecting the woman of his choice to maintain an equally high standard. Among those examples springing to mind are Angel Clare (Tess of the d'Urbervilles), Clym Yeobright (The Return of the Native), and Maybold (Under the Greenwood Tree). In each instance the woman involved fails to live up to the standards expected of her, and with this failure a number of possibilities are raised. Is her desperation to escape from the restricted and restrictive world of her parents (or parent-substitute) and her longing for life outside her small Wessex village so great it leads her into deceit and immorality? Or, and this becomes the central focus point in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, is there some question about what constitutes moral and immoral behaviour? Does the socially acceptable, orthodoxly moral stance represent a true morality, or does it, by its very rigidity and lack of compassion, turn into immorality?

Any examination of the moral issues in Tess of the d'Urbervilles must involve a close look at the patterns of behaviour, modes of thought, attitudes and judgements displayed by all members of the Durbeyfield family, but in particular by Tess Durbeyfield. Possessing a moral awareness which owes little either to the fatalistic, expedient view of morality displayed by her parents or to Victorian conventional morality, Tess reaches out for a more honourable kind of truth. However, because Tess's sense of morality is a very personal code of integrity it also has an individualising and isolating effect upon her. Even as early as the May-Day dance she is presented as a solitary figure, standing "apart by the hedge alone" (TD, 2), a figure whom Angel does not notice until he leaves in pursuit of his brothers. The isolating effect of Tess's moral code becomes even more apparent when she rejects outright rural standards of conduct by dissociating herself from the Trantridge women, refusing to join them in their drinking and dancing, and condemning their moral standards with, "'Indeed, then, I shall not fight . . . and if I have known you was of that sort, I wouldn't have so let myself down as to come with such a whorage as this is!'" (TD, 10).

As might be expected Tess's motivation and conduct receive the greatest amount of narrative attention as Hardy, making a case for his "pure woman", directs the narrative comment towards this end. Not that the author's attitude toward his central character is one of unqualified approval;

certain shortcomings in Tess are admitted,[20] but these in no way affect the argument for Tess's purity. Rather more damaging to Tess, because it would seem to reduce the tragedy of Tess's ordeal into the most minor of episodes, is the remark, "But for the world's opinion those experiences would have been simply a liberal education" (TD, 15). Is Hardy asking us here to believe that Alec's rape was not an especially serious offence, "simply a liberal education," and if this were his intention how can it be reconciled with the sense of violation so much in evidence when the attack took place? The presence of this and other self-contradictory passages can be explained, Bernard Paris has suggested, by Hardy's desire "to defend his 'doctrine of the moment' - Tess's purity or innocence - by as many arguments as he can find."[21] One such argument is the attack upon conventional morality, or "the world's opinion", which has deemed that the sinned-against Tess, and others in a similar position, are no longer fit members of human society. Although Hardy retaliates against this harsh, unmitigating verdict by condemning, in their turn, those who profess to advocate such rigid standards of conduct, it is made clear that he does not really intend to condemn the standards themselves when Tess asserts her own moral beliefs in defiance of the Trantridge women and their lax attitude towards what is basically conventional Victorian morality.

Tess is young, innocent, idealistic. Taunting her are women who have no illusions about any aspect of the male/fe-

male relationship. To some extent it may be possible to argue that the women of Trantridge are following their natural instinct for procreation, and Tess is being unnatural by pursuing the Victorian ideal of chastity. However, like the phrases lessening the gravity of Alec's crime, any attempt to reduce the importance of the stand taken by Tess against the promiscuous behaviour of Car Darch and her friends runs so counter to the tenor of the novel as a whole that it cannot be considered seriously.

Acceptance of the view of morality granted to Tess, and seemingly endorsed by Hardy, as basically a very conventional view, still leaves unclear the extent to which Tess's rejection of Trantridge immorality may be considered to include the wider rural community. If, as the narrator has stated, "Every village has its idiosyncrasy, its constitution, often its own code of morality" (TD, 10) it could be argued that the standards of the Trantridge women were not those of the rural community at large and that Tess's rejection of Trantridge values does not necessarily imply a rejection of Marlott values. While this may well be true there is enough evidence of Hardy's concern about declining rural standards, both as far as morality and a sense of duty were concerned,[22] to suggest that the Trantridge women were not unique and that Hardy regarded their immorality and general lack of responsibility to be an inevitable accompaniment to the labouring class's new found mobility. The coupling together, in this passage from "The Dorsetshire Labourer", of "morality" and

"the duties of life" is also useful for pinpointing a serious divergence between the moral standards of the elder Durbeyfields and those of their daughter, Tess. An attitude of responsibility to oneself and one's fellow man, as well as the individual attempt to live according to a sense of what is right and honourable, are all inherent in the term "duties of life" and these are aspects of Tess's personality which are stressed from the early chapters on. The young girl who returns home after a brief escape into the carefree world of the May-day celebrations and is remorseful that her mother should have been left alone with the household chores (TD, 3), displays a concern that extends filial obligations into a very real and genuine feeling for a fellow human being. A further example of Tess's adherence to what may be called "the duties of life" is provided on the occasion when John Durbeyfield, incapacitated by a bout of drinking, finds the task of taking the bees to market beyond him. Once again the girl accepts the responsibilities which fall to her lot, endeavouring to the best of her ability to fill the role abdicated by her father.

An original and persuasively argued explanation of Tess's dutiful nature is offered in Bernard Paris' essay, "Experiences of Thomas Hardy." Convinced that Hardy and other great nineteenth-century novelists perceived more of life than they were capable of understanding or interpreting and that Tess Durbeyfield is as much a victim of her own personality as of outside forces, Paris has examined the

novel in light of modern psychological theory. Horneyan psychology, with its emphasis upon an individual's neurotic defences, was found to possess the greatest degree of relevance and to present the most promising approach. Tess's concern for her family's welfare, labelled by Paris as "compulsive", is seen to derive from her failure to "receive the parental care which would give her a feeling of security and the freedom to grow in accordance with her nature."[23] The neurotic strategies which result from an unsatisfactory upbringing take, in Tess's case, the forms of compliancy, humility and the sacrifice of self; self-effacing tendencies which, it is suggested, permit Tess to overcome her self-hate and allow her to live up to her own idealized image. This effacement of self helps to explain the girl's apparent willingness to compromise her moral standards in the face of parental pressure. Whenever conflict arises ethical standards become secondary to Tess's compelling internal need to devote herself to the family's welfare. Tess's reluctance, for example, to seek out the Stoke d'Urbervilles must yield to her conviction that she, and only she, can save the family from the dreadful straits in which it finds itself.

Joan and her husband are happy to depend upon their trustworthy daughter and are virtually free from all scruples of conscience. They experience no qualms about the burdens imposed upon their eldest child nor do they doubt the ethicality of their request that Tess should approach the Stoke d'Urbervilles to "claim kin." And, as might be expected,

this lack of conscience on the part of John and Joan Durbeyfield is accompanied by an almost total indifference toward any moral stand taken by their daughter. Tess is valued for her capability, but the parents' attitude towards the girl is indicated with Mr. Durbeyfield's comment, "'Tess is queer'" (TD, 4) and with her mother's description of her as "'an odd maid'" (TD, 7). Eventually the recognition that there are depths to her daughter that she has never understood does come to Mrs. Durbeyfield when, reacting to Angel's remark, "'I know her better than you do,'" Joan replies, "'That's very likely, sir; for I have never really known her'" (TD, 54). This quietly compassionate remark, standing at this very late stage of the novel in ironic contrast to the essential arrogance of Angel's assertion, contains a hint that while Joan is not yet ready to deny the singularity of Tess's personality, she is nevertheless arriving at some appreciation of the unique qualities possessed by her daughter.

It may also be argued that this claim of ignorance has the effect, too, of mitigating the reprehensibility of Mrs. Durbeyfield's earlier conduct, inasmuch as those who have little or no awareness of the distinction between right and wrong can scarcely be considered as answerable for their actions as those who wilfully act against a known rule of morality. If Joan does not realize she has forced Tess to act in a way which seems truly unethical to the latter, and the remark, "I have never really known her" would suggest this to be the case, then Joan's accountability is correspond-

ingly diminished.

It is also clear that Joan, with her consistent counsel of survival, remains true to a code which predates any Victorian set of beliefs. And while it is easy enough to condemn this attitude, as Roy Morrell has done, as an emanation from (and here Morrell quotes the phrase that John Holloway applies to Arabella) "a rooted tradition of deceit,"[24] this is to pass a judgment upon Joan that Hardy himself was not prepared to make. Joan's morality consists of a tolerant acceptance of basic drives and the recognition that what cannot be altered must be accepted. As has already been stated the question of right and wrong has little place in this system, expediency being the chief and almost only yard-stick. By almost any moral criteria, Victorian or non-Victorian, Joan stands condemned with her brutally frank comment to her husband on the subject of her daughter, Tess. "'Well, as one of the genuine stock, she ought to make her way with 'en, if she plays her trump card aright. And if he don't marry her afore he will after'" (TD, 7). Here, the use of sexuality is being advocated for one purpose only - to entrap the eligible male into marriage. Equally damaging to Joan, because of its advocacy of deceit, is the letter to Tess in which the mother advises her daughter, "on no account do you say a word of your Bygone Trouble to [Angel]" (TD, 31). Yet both incidents occur because, to Joan's way of thinking, Tess is being offered on each occasion an opportunity to escape from the grinding poverty of the Durbeyfield family and each re-

presents, again from Joan's point of view, a chance that only the greatest of fools could reject.

This defence of Joan's position is strengthened somewhat by several additional factors. In the light of Hardy's introductory note and passages found throughout the novel attacking conventional morality (TD, Explanatory Note to 1st. ed.; 13; 15) it is unlikely he intends Joan to be judged in terms of those same conventional moral standards. The candour of Joan's comment to her husband is so reminiscent of the frankly sexual wooing and winning in evidence during the May-day celebration that it is clear we are being taken back to an earlier tradition which predates the formality and propriety of the "puritanical-style" Victorian courtship ritual. It is also true that the basic request of Joan Durbeyfield's letter is for Tess to see her seduction in its true perspective, that is, to see it as a misfortune which has befallen others and to bear in mind her position as victim rather than moral transgressor. Finally, Tess thinks of Joan as "her poor foolish mother" (TD, 12), an assessment containing more pity than criticism and one which seems to express Hardy's own standpoint toward the morality of Joan's schemings when she is described during the narration as a "poor witless wife" (TD, 6) and as "the light-minded woman" (TD, 6). Other narrative comments in a similar vein include the remarks "Joan's simple vanity" (TD, 13) and the statement that Tess was "mentally older than her mother" (TD, 6). Simplicity, naivety, foolishness, simple-minded good-heartedness are all indicated,

but at no point is there any attempt to convey the impression that Joan's actions are sinful, nor is it possible to dismiss those actions, as the promiscuity displayed by Car Darch and the women of Trantridge was dismissed, as totally immoral.

One further aspect of the basic amorality displayed by Joan concerns her inability to have any understanding of evil in others, above all in Alec d'Urberville. The strongest reaction she would seem to experience in this regard is when we are told, "Personally Joan had no liking for Alec" (TD, 52). For Tess no such half-measures apply. Although as a character Alec may be stilted and unreal in conception, a point which critics have been quick to make,[25] there is no questioning the fear his presence, even prior to the "rape", arouses in Tess. Moreover, as readers, we are conscious that this fear, extending far beyond concern at physical and sexual assault, is engendered by and linked to Biblical beliefs and imagery. To a large degree this is achieved through the presence of two religious motivated figures whose beliefs border on the fanatic. One is Alec in the role of revivalist preacher and the other, the writer of texts whose message, "THY DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT" strikes Tess "with accusatory horror" (TD, 12). As far as Alec is concerned the hell-fire religion phase of his characterization, with its vision of a man in the grip of a passion that is basically unchanged, whether sexual or religious, and the imagery thereby generated, does much to create a figure to be feared in a way that his assertion, "'I was born bad, and I have lived bad, and I

shall die bad in all probability'" (TD, 12) fails to do. Similar to, but on a rather different level from this very early comment is the speech where Alec declares, "'You are Eve, and I am the old Other One come to tempt you in the disguise of an inferior animal'" (TD, 50). Although Tess denies she has any thoughts of him as Satan, and J.O. Bailey refuses to consider this sufficient evidence to include d'Urberville in his category of "Mephistophelian Visitant",[26] the intent of d'Urberville's creator must surely be to intensify mere "badness" into something approaching "evil". To be sure, there remains something too passionate and uncontrolled in d'Urberville for him to be one of the rationalists or shrewd schemers to whom Bailey has applied his label, and for much the same reason his wickedness cannot really be considered truly malevolent. Yet "badness" seems too inadequate a word to encompass the threat he represents to Tess, initially to her body and ultimately to her spirit of resistance.

Joan is blind to the fact that Alec is dangerous on account of his irrationality, and evil because of his determination to subject all to the satisfaction of his own selfish desires. For all her tolerance and understanding of human sexual needs she has no conception of the intensity of Alec's infatuation for her daughter nor of the lengths he is prepared to go to satisfy that ardour. Although there is a prophetic ring to her remark, "'he's all afire wi' love for her any eye can see'" (TD, 7), she has no idea just how consuming passion in a man like d'Urberville can be. Her

failure to be more perceptive of Alec's character and of her daughter's fears would appear to be the natural outcome of an uncomplicated rural mind which responds to simple cause and effect without any appreciation of the consequences of obsessional love.

The writer of texts, representing one aspect of the religious elements in this novel, has an importance more pervasive and far-reaching than the attention allotted to him in the story would seem to suggest. In reacting to his message so immediately and in such a self-recriminatory manner, Tess draws attention to a matter which is to be raised on several occasions, that of her guilt or innocence in relation to the events that took place in The Chase after the dance at Trantridge (TD, 10). From one point of view this issue has already been covered in the discussion of Tess's high ethical principles, but not alluded to until now is the extent to which Tess's moral standards would appear to be a legacy of a religious and an educational system propagating a rigid code of morality. At certain points in the novel we find the authority of God's judgement is for Tess virtually inseparable from the authority of society's judgement. Typical of such occasions, aside from the already noted incident with the writer of the texts, is her desperate attempt to ensure that her child will not die without the benefits of baptism (TD, 14). Church and society have condemned the child to be "consigned to the nethermost corner of hell, as its double doom for lack of baptism and lack of legitimacy" (TD, 14). There

is no suggestion of Tess questioning the validity of the sentence. When she does plead for the child's redemption it is on the grounds of justice alone. If the child has not sinned why should he be punished? The dogmatic nature of Victorian morality prevents it from catering to such extravagances. Its stand, summed up by the remark from the writer of the texts who asserts, "'I cannot split hairs on that burning query'" (TD, 12), places Tess in the position where she must believe and accept the teachings of the church, or else believe, but refuse to accept the vision of a harsh, avenging and unforgiving God.

Hardy is careful to distinguish between these two facets of Tess's personality. One he labels "her conventional aspect" (TD, 14), the other he describes as being composed of her "innate sensations" (TD, 14). These "innate sensations", representing all that is good and honourable in Tess, her personal integrity, sense of self-worth and her determination to do what is right are an integral part of her character. Frequently, the innate sensations are at odds with her conventional aspect. Conventional morality has judged Tess after her experiences with Alec d'Urberville to be an immoral and loose woman, for whom even social ostracism would be too mild a fate. Returning to Marlott, depressed, ashamed and unhappy, she is disposed to agree with this opinion. The resultant self-abasement, which sees Tess withdrawing into the protection of the darkness and the family cottage, earns her the censure of the narrator who asserts, that, "what had bowed

her head so profoundly - the thought of the world's concern at her situation - was founded on an illusion" (TD, 14). Denying there has been any offence and therefore any need for shame, the narrator insists that the only law broken by Tess is a social law. Tess's failure to possess similar convictions is attributed to her upbringing. She is a product of a church and school system which have aimed at instilling their own certainty about the nature of righteousness and their convictions on the harsh penalties awaiting all transgressors, especially those who have transgressed sexually. The lessons have been absorbed well; self-reproach and guilt dominate Tess's conscious mind and condition her attitude to the natural world. Her vision of "a wet day" as "the expression of irremediable grief at her weakness in the mind of some vague ethical being whom she could not class definitely as the God of her childhood, and could not comprehend as any other" (TD, 13) reinforces the link between Tess's conventional aspect and the religious and moral instruction she has received.

Tess's innate sensations are generally free of orthodox religious connotations and lead her toward a very personal kind of truth. In striving after this truth Tess does not seek exoneration for herself. In fact, the bitter remarks to Alec, "'If I had gone for love o' you, if I had ever sincerely loved you, if I loved you still, I should not so loathe and hate myself for my weakness as I do now!'" (TD, 12) contain a self-denunciation as harsh as any denunciation motivated

by conventional morality. Tess is fully aware of the wrong she has committed. To remain at The Slopes and accept Alec's favours is to be guilty of an offence which cannot be explained away as a transgression of social law. Tess has betrayed her integrity and principles and, regardless of whether or not a social law has been broken, has betrayed herself. For this reason, and in recognition of the responsibility she must bear for her actions, her anger is directed at herself, rather than at the man who has precipitated her downfall.

At Talbothays the conflict between Tess's intuitive sense of right and wrong and conventional standards of morality sets the scene for another betrayal of self. All the girl's inner feelings insist Angel should be told of her past history. Counselling silence are her mother's demand for reticence and her own fears about the consequences of her revelation. Tess's surrender to these fears shows the extent to which she has consciously accepted conventional morality's judgement of her unfitness to marry. The assertions, "'I am not good enough - not worthy enough'" (TD, 28), "'I am not worthy of you'" (TD, 31) and the statement that one or other of the dairymaids would make Angel "'a properer wife than I'" (TD, 29) endorse the conventional viewpoint which considers virtue to be a state of the body rather than of the spirit. Even the more down-to-earth rural morality proves to offer little more than a variation upon the same theme. In the story related by Dairyman Crick, Jack Dollop is willing to go to any lengths to avoid marrying the girl who carries his child (TD,

21) and this general stance is upheld by Joan's insistence that no man will wed a girl whom he knows to be unchaste (TD, 31).

With her sinfulness proclaimed on all sides Tess finds it increasingly difficult to believe her honour and integrity could have survived d'Urberville's defilement of her body. And when, after the wedding, Angel's voice is added to the clamor of criticism Tess's sense of her own worthlessness reaches a new peak. The punishment and suffering inflicted by Angel are welcomed because they are seen by Tess to be no more than her due. However, her hopes of achieving some form of expiation through her agony are doomed to disappointment because of the limitations of Angel's moral vision. Despite Angel's assertion that his rejection of his wife after learning of her previous sexual experiences, is not "'a question of respectability, but one of principle!'" (TD, 36), on the evidence in the novel, respectability has a larger part to play than principle. Clare's worry about the scandal which would arise from an immediate parting and about the taunts their unborn children would face should Tess's history become known (TD, 36) more than establish Angel's concern with his good name, a concern which is little different from Mrs. Day's about her reputation as a housekeeper (Under the Greenwood Tree). But Angel's preoccupation with public opinion is neither amusing nor an innocuous episode in the novel. His desire to conform causes him to lose sight of human truth and understanding and to harden his heart to the effect of

his behaviour upon the one who, emotionally, is closest to him.

At no time is Angel's blindness and cruelty more in evidence than when he chooses to confront Tess with the shame her unborn children will experience once they learn of their mother's past. Using the parent/child relationship as an instrument of torture Angel strikes Tess at her most vulnerable point. The effectiveness of his weapon is magnified by Tess's acute sensitivity to the shame her actions have already brought to the Durbeyfield family. And yet she belongs to a family which, despite the inadequacies of the parents, is a closely knit unit, whose members exhibit a strong sense of loyalty to each other. No matter what offence Tess may have committed she remains an accepted and welcome member of that family, a member who will be publicly defended by her mother, although it will cost the Durbeyfields their home (TD, 51). For Angel to suggest that the family unit headed by Tess and himself would not display the same kind of loyalty, the same devotion to each other and the same sense of unity in adversity is to mock Tess's capacity for parental love. To suggest too, that those children who had experienced all of Tess's love and devotion throughout their growing years could turn their mother into an outcast, having rejected her for some offence in a remote and distant past, is to render the relationship between the child and his parent, a travesty of filial love.

Angel's use of this particular reproach is by no means unexpected. It is quite in keeping with the coldly formal relationship which exists within the Clare family; a family where people are seen in terms of the function they perform, rather than as warm, breathing, living individuals. This is particularly true of Mrs. Clare to whom mankind exists only at the level of the generality. She sees those around her as repentant sinners, as dutiful sons, as needy parishioners or as accomplished young ladies. Hers is a depersonalizing, abstracting vision which dismisses emotion, impulsiveness and even the love between parents and their children as unimportant. Both her failure to appreciate Mrs. Crick's gifts (TD, 25) and her inability to have any real understanding of her son's desire to marry a dairymaid (TD, 26) arise from the limitations of her attitude.

Although Angel is shown as a young man attempting to break away from the restrictive thinking of his elders, when faced with Tess's confession he reverts to the depersonalizing vision of his mother. He can no longer see the individual who is Tess, only the woman who has sinned and betrayed his trust. Once the reader realises that Tess is suffering because of Angel's inadequacies and not for any offences, imaginary or otherwise, she may have committed, the impossibility of her earning Angel's forgiveness through her pain becomes apparent. Not until Angel is able to humanize his vision will he be capable of dispensing either compassion or justice. In the meantime Tess must suffer because she fails to appreciate

the terrible limitations of Angel's thinking. Only toward the very end of the novel, when worn down physically and mentally by her suffering, will she cry out in protest at the shameful treatment which Angel has meted out.

> O why have you treated me so monstrously, Angel! I do not deserve it. I have thought it all over carefully, and I can never, never forgive you! You know that I did not intend to wrong you - why have you so wronged me? You are cruel, cruel indeed! I will try to forget you. It is all injustice I have received at your hands! (TD, 51)

In order to make such an accusation Tess has to be as convinced of the rightness of her moral position as she had been when she rebuked the women of Trantridge. Because the charge also represents an assertion of self, impossible as long as she continues to accept the judgement passed upon her by society, it is her final rejection of conventional morality's hypocrisy and inhumanity.

The two extremes of Victorian morality, ranging from the superficially conventional to the more serious personal search for truth, are found competing with each other in Angel Clare. His choice of Tess as a wife could never have taken place without a rejection of middle-class values, nor could it have happened had he not seen Tess as "no insignificant creature to toy with and dismiss; but a woman living her precious life" (TD, 25). At the same time as he admits to this belief in human integrity and sanctity Angel tries to ignore the fact of human sexuality, and ignores it at a time when much of what he feels for Tess is sexual in origin.

"Clare had studied the curves of those lips so many times that he could reproduce them mentally with ease: and now, as they again confronted him, clothed with colour and life, they sent an aura over his flesh, a breeze through his nerves, which wellnigh produced a qualm" (TD, 24). By burying these feelings and allowing conventional attitudes and Victorian prudery to dominate his thinking and cloud his judgement, Angel renders his search for truth an exercise in futility and fallaciousness.

Angel's espousal of both conventional and non-conventional morality is rare among Hardy's characters. Support for the one will generally preclude the other, and the moral idealist tends to be as little bothered with the niceties of life as the conformist is with deeper, more universal truths. Although the existence of these two conflicting attitudes in Angel is unusual, that his non-conventional beliefs should owe little to the thinking of his parents is not. Nor is he alone! Tess Durbeyfield, Clym Yeobright and Elizabeth Henchard can also be numbered among those who adopt independent moral positions. Conversely, the child whose thinking is essentially conventional is likely to adopt the values of his parents. Conformity becomes established as the overt behaviour, attitudes and prejudices of parents and children follow in the same groove. In some instances, when the child has been better educated and is more sophisticated than his parents, the direction may well come from the younger generation. Anne Garland, Fancy Day and Grace Melbury set the stan-

dards of gentility within their families and provide the example for their parents to follow. By doing so they advance, but do not oppose, the basic position of their parents.

CHAPTER 3

Honour Thy Father and Thy Mother

Although morality in general terms was discussed in the previous chapter the very special responsibilities and duties in the parent/child relationship were left virtually untouched. These are the moral responsibilities and duties which distinguish the family relationship from all other close human relationships and which by their fulfilment, or otherwise, provide a standard for judging the quality of that relationship. What are the moral responsibilities of the parent toward the child and what are those of the sons and daughters in relation to their parents? Clearly, the child has the right to expect that his early physical and emotional needs will be met by his parents, and it is the parent's duty to fulfil these requirements. The parent, for his part, has the right to expect obedience from his child, but just how much obedience, and under what circumstances can resistance be considered justified? In Hardy's novels much of the tension within a family centres on the issue of obedience as parental authority and the child's growing sense of independence meet head on. Whether the child deliberately defies his parents in order to pursue his own course or submits against his own better judgement to his parent's will would seem to be immaterial. The fabric of the family relationship is shaken and sometimes torn irreparably by the conflict.

Duty without love is a poor basis for any relationship and when the parent, or parent figure brings up a child without love he is perpetuating a chain of tragedy by his failure. The orphaned Jude who is taken in by his aunt out of duty ex-

periences a cold and unhappy childhood. Jude's physical needs are satisfied, but his emotional needs cannot be met by a woman who has no love to give anyone, let alone an unwanted nephew. Jude grows up knowing he is a burden to his aunt and this pattern is repeated with Jude's son. When Arabella writes to inform Jude of the boy's existence and his imminent arrival, she emphasises his uselessness ("he is not old enough to be of any use in the bar, nor will be for years and years"), his being a burden ("my mother and father . . . don't see why they should be encumbered with the child any longer") and the unwillingness of the mother and the grandparents to accept any responsibility for him ("They have . . . packed him off to me . . . and I must ask you to take him when he arrives, for I don't know what to do with him") (JO, V, 3). Thus Jude finds himself in the position of his aunt many years earlier, obliged to take a child nobody cares about or wants. Just as his aunt might very well have done, Jude's immediate reaction when he learns that he will be responsible for the boy, is to put the child's material welfare ahead of his emotional welfare. Lamenting, "'If I were better off, I should not stop for a moment to think whose he might be'" (JO, V, 3) Jude makes a response which is totally inadequate and bodes ill for the forthcoming father/son relationship.

Jude's early life is repeated and distorted in his son. The sense of isolation, a result of Jude's inability to find anyone with whom to share his childhood dreams, becomes even more acute in Jude's son. The self-sufficiency which comes

from knowing there is no-one to depend upon and which enabled Jude to resort to a variety of stratagems to obtain books is repeated when Father Time arrives at Aldbrickham Station. Alone and unaided, expressing no surprise at not being met, he is able to find his way to the house where Jude and Sue live. Ultimately however, the most terrible part of this repeating pattern is the way in which Jude's feeling that death offers an attractive alternative to life (JO, I, 4 and I, 11) is brought to its logical conclusion in Father Time's murder of himself and the two other children. When Jude repeats the doctor's explanation for the tragedy, "'It was in his nature to do it,'" he would seem to be hinting that the boy's melancholia is part of the legacy his child has received from him. Jude however does not want to see the tragedy in this light, and his ready acceptance of the remainder of the doctor's explanation, that, "'there are such boys springing up amongst us - boys of a sort unknown in the last generation - the outcome of new views of life'" (JO, VI, 2) would appear to be an attempt to absolve himself of responsibility for the child's actions. Despite this unwillingness to accept any blame, Jude is involved, for he has failed to understand and provide for the very special needs of his son. His failure, however, pales when compared to the burden of blame which must rest with Arabella and her parents.

The child's early upbringing has left a permanent mark upon him and determined his outlook on life. Hardy tells us he was different from other children in that he "seemed to

have begin with the generals of life, and never to have concerned himself with the particulars" (JO, V, 3), a description indicating emotional deprivation has prevented him from relating to individual people and things. In the wording of the suicide note, "Done because we are too menny" (JO, VI, 2) we are given one last indication of the boy's inability to see either himself or the two babies as special individuals who are loved or treasured. The incorrect spelling of "many" extends the word's meaning to suggest "men" or "mankind" and represents the final act of generalization by this child. To him, all three children are part of abstract humanity whose deaths can only help to ease the burden on those who are left behind. Although usually explained as a symbolic figure, Father Time has inherited a tendency toward melancholia from his father. Further, his parents and their substitutes have failed to provide him with a normal parent/child relationship. Consequently, his emotional growth has been stunted and his outlook on life irrevocably moulded by his early experiences. The symbolic connotations which accompany his characterisation do not in any way deny the psychological validity of his presentation.

In The Mayor of Casterbridge Hardy deals at length with a man who fails to live up to his responsibilities as a parent. The opening incident in the novel, the sale of the wife and daughter to a passing sailor, dramatises, in a startling and telling manner, Henchard's abdication of his role as father and husband. Responsibilities, however, can-

not be cast aside so easily and the return of Susan and her daughter raises again for the Mayor the whole issue of fatherhood and the duties associated with it. His very human reaction of wincing when Elizabeth-Jane speaks of Newson as her "father" reminds us that although nineteen years have passed since Henchard last saw his daughter he has not ceased to view himself as the girl's father. It also suggests that any coming to terms with this vision of the rights of the biological father, as opposed to earning his child's respect, devotion and love by being a true father, is likely to be traumatic indeed for this man.

Henchard's conception of fatherhood dictates his attitude to Elizabeth-Jane. It is vitally important to the Mayor that he can credit himself with the siring of the girl. The need to possess is an integral part of his make-up, and what could be more a man's own than a child of his own flesh? Believing Susan's daughter to be his natural child he considers the girl to be an extension of himself. He is thus able to look upon her accomplishments with pride and revel in their reflected glory. Hence, too, his inability to accept Elizabeth-Jane as an individual in her own right and also his desire for the girl to drop the name of Newson in favour of Henchard. With the adoption of his surname Henchard's proprietary rights to the girl he believes he has fathered would be officially established.

This very distorted view of kinship has some far-reach-

ing implications for it assumes the rights of the natural father to be supreme; supreme even to the extent of Henchard believing his daughter's love will follow naturally once she is told of her parentage. When so much faith is placed upon a single biological fact the quality of the relationship is bound to suffer. Nothing dynamic or meaningful between a father and his daughter can be achieved without effort, understanding and real affection. Perhaps because she has already experienced a close father/daughter relationship Elizabeth has a greater appreciation of what is involved in the relationship than Henchard. To her, parental behaviour is proof of fatherhood, and her acceptance of Henchard as her father is based upon this premise. Henchard's ability to argue his case convincingly, or to produce the promised written evidence is immaterial. Elizabeth believes the Mayor's claim only because his behaviour is otherwise inexplicable. "'You would not have done half the things you have done for me, and let me have my own way so entirely, and bought me presents, if I had only been your step-daughter!'" (MC, 19). However, acceptance of Henchard on these grounds does create difficulties for Elizabeth-Jane when she thinks back to the relationship between Newson and herself. Throughout the years of her growing up Newson had been her true father, proving it by word and deed, as he filled that role to the best of his ability. Now, because acknowledgement of Henchard as her father entails a denial of the father's love freely given and received during those years, Elizabeth cannot help but be a-

ware of the wrong she is committing. Her acceptance of Henchard is an offence against the memory of Newson.

Both Elizabeth-Jane and Henchard are brought in the course of the novel to the realization that the adoptive or stepparent can love and suffer just as deeply as any real parent. Elizabeth's attachment of an emotional value to the natural parent is readily established when she asserts in response to Henchard's request to be considered as her father, "'I can think of no other as my father, except my father'" (MC, 19). On another occasion, after being convinced of the validity of Henchard's claim to be her father, she will add to her praise of Newson's kindness the rather disparaging rider, "'but that is not the same thing as being one's real father after all'" (MC, 19). This belief in the very special relationship between a child and his natural parent accounts for the bitterness of her reaction to Henchard's misleading of Newson (MC, 43 and 44). Indignation at Henchard's trickery becomes contempt for the man who has engineered the separation of a father and his daughter. Of particular signifance at this juncture is the tolerance and lack of rancor displayed by Newson. Here is a man who is neither domineering nor possessive, a man who is the complete antithesis of Henchard, yet who possesses enough generosity of spirit to feel toward the Mayor only compassion and goodwill. This generosity of spirit also permits Newson to appreciate the depth of Henchard's love for Elizabeth at a time when the girl herself cannot. Not until it is too late will Elizabeth recognize

that the sole motive for Henchard's actions, no matter how cruel or malicious they may have seemed, has been his love for the girl he has come to look on as his daughter.

The non-proprietary attitude of Newson toward his daughter has serious implications for the whole natural versus adoptive parent question. Newson's self-critical comment, "'I've already in my lifetime been an intruder into his family quite as far as politeness can be expected to put up with'" (MC, 43) suggests the sailor's return to Casterbridge has been primarily to see his daughter, not to lay claim to her. His behaviour during and after the wedding provides further evidence of this same intention. Unlike Henchard, who views the romance between Farfrae and Elizabeth in terms of the threat it represents to himself, Newson is quite happy with Elizabeth's choice of a husband. Appreciating his daughter's good sense and self-reliance, Newson recognizes she is no longer a child in need of a father's protection, but an independent young woman who must be allowed to stand on her own feet. His convictions on this point are primarily responsible for his abrupt departure from Casterbridge only three days after Elizabeth's wedding. A comparison between this leave-taking and Henchard's earlier painfully emotional departure upon learning of Newson's return (MC, 43) underscores each man's interpretation of his relationship with Elizabeth-Jane. The natural father is eager to loosen any ties of dependency which may still exist and replace them with a bond of friendship. Henchard's emotions are too little under his control

for him to be capable of this sort of adjustment, even if he could accept a view which runs so counter to his own.

Unless Henchard can have Elizabeth's total commitment, he feels he has nothing. He cannot envisage a developing relationship, nor one where his closeness with Elizabeth is shared with a third and even fourth person. Dependency, too, is crucial to the links the Mayor seeks to forge between himself and others. By its restriction of financial and mental freedoms, dependency acts as a welding agent which would lock one partner into an assertive role, the other into providing the submissive response. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that a totally demoralized Henchard, who has lost all his material possessions and who fears the loss of Elizabeth-Jane, should accept the submissive role himself. "He schooled himself to accept her will, in this as in other matters, as absolute and unquestionable. He dreaded lest an antagonistic word should lose for him such regard as he had regained from her by his devotion" (MC, 42). Because Henchard is convinced that dependency lies at the heart of the father/daughter relationship, he fails to take into account that the very special links between a growing child and his parent cannot continue unchanged into adulthood. As the child reaches maturity the part played by dependency must diminish correspondingly. Child and parent must reach out for a new freedom and independence and adjust to their new roles if a healthy parent/child relationship is to continue into the child's adult years.

Henchard's inflexible conception of fatherhood in the end works to his own disadvantage. Elizabeth does not love in the same exclusive and possessive way of Henchard. She is capable of loving two fathers, and says as much when she declares to the Mayor, "'I could have loved you always - I would have, gladly. . . . But how can I when I know you have deceived me so'" (MC, 44). The deceit which brings the split between father and stepdaughter has occurred because Henchard is convinced Elizabeth would abandon him for Newson, her real father, were she to learn the truth of her birth. A fundamental lack of faith in his own ability to hold on to Elizabeth, to convince her of his need for her, despite the absence of any blood-ties, leads Henchard into dishonesty and misrepresentation. His pursuit of this course causes him to dupe not only Newson and Elizabeth-Jane, but also himself. Arguing that no-one can love Elizabeth as he does, and that the absence of some years will have dimmed Newson's paternal feelings, he tries to justify his own actions although well aware he is guilty of wrongdoing. Had Henchard been able to forget his pre-occupation with blood-ties and been able to believe himself capable of building with Elizabeth-Jane, in a spirit of trust and co-operation, an understanding based upon the truth of the girl's birth, a positive and healthy relationship would have ensued. As it is, without such a commitment from Henchard he becomes farther and farther embroiled in the web of deception he has spun around himself.

Henchard is guilty of much in his relationship with his

stepdaughter. Some of his actions, like his inordinate jealousy and the lies he tells Newson, may be excused on the grounds of his passionate character and his overwhelming love for the girl. For some of his other deeds there is no such excuse. All of Henchard's behaviour to Elizabeth-Jane from the time he learns he is not her real father until he comes to love her in her own right is reprehensible; however, none more so than his attempt to discharge his moral obligations by financial means. At this point in the novel Henchard's anger has turned to coldness and indifference, and when Elizabeth offers to move out of his house he readily agrees, suggesting, "'a small annuity . . . so that I may be independent of you'" (MC, 21). On a previous occasion Henchard had used market-place methods to get rid of his wife and young child and now he resorts again to similar tactics. He offers payment to Elizabeth, partly to salve his conscience over his treatment of the girl and partly to ensure he will no longer be bothered by her presence. In both cases the annuity represents an attempt by Henchard to shirk his moral responsibilities.

This belief that a commercial value can be placed on human relationships and that an offence can be erased by monetary recompense is not confined to Henchard. In Tess of the d'Urbervilles Alec d'Urberville has too limited a moral vision to be aware of Tess's mental sufferings, but he is most anxious to save her from physical suffering. Because he is incapable of judging well-being other than in financial

terms he declares, "'I am ready to pay to the uttermost farthing. You know you need not work in the fields or the dairies again. You know you may clothe yourself with the best'" (TD, 12). This offer is a double affront to Tess. It assumes any injury can be compensated and it is an insidious attempt to buy her submission, thus compounding Alec's original crime of taking Tess by force. The terms accompanying this offer mean that Tess, unlike Elizabeth-Jane who can accept the annuity offered by her father because it is her due as a dependent daughter, cannot take d'Urberville's money and still maintain her self-respect.

No consideration of the parent's duty toward his child can ignore the related issue of the child's duty toward his parent. In Hardy's novels the moral dilemmas arising from the child's sense of his filial obligations frequently revolve around the choice of a marriage partner. A good match, both socially and financially, is seen by the parents to be imperative for their daughter's future welfare and happiness. Often however, the man favoured by the mother and father is not acceptable to the girl. Her reasons for this rejection may be quite valid and the parents' concern over financial standing may well have blinded them to any shortcomings on the part of their candidate. Equally valid may be the parents' objections to the mate whom their infatuated offspring has chosen. Just where does duty lie in this instance? Should filial obedience prevail to the extent of obliging a girl to marry where no love exists? Even the most dutiful of

Hardy's women are extremely reluctant to agree to marriage under these conditions. Grace Melbury's marriage to Fitzpiers may be prompted by her acquiescence to her father's wishes, but the union would never have taken place without Grace's initial attraction to Eldred. The only truly cold-blooded decision to marry for the sake of a fortune is found in The Hand of Ethelberta, a novel in which the heroine imposes upon herself the duty to marry well in order to secure her family's well-being.

Hardy portrays in Ethelberta a woman who combines a keen sense of filial duty with a willingness to manipulate others for her own and her family's advantage. No matter how honourable her motives may considered to be, Ethelberta's conduct shows a total disregard for the desires and sensibilities of all whose futures she seeks to direct. She tolerates no opposition to her plans and dismisses dissent as unwelcome carping. Unexpectedly, because it is so uncharacteristic of a Hardy novel, she manages, despite the essentially immoral aspects of her behaviour, to escape moral judgement and retribution. Normally such actions as those committed by Ethelberta lead to, at best unhappiness, at worst suffering and death, for the manipulated as well as the manipulator (for example, Henchard's attempted and actual use of Elizabeth, Lucetta and others for his own ends, and Melbury's efforts to realize his own social aspirations through his daughter Grace). In this novel such tragic implications are put aside, as are the plausible consequences of an attractive

young woman giving herself in marriage, for the sake of a title and financial security, to a lecherous and underhand old man. Instead, Hardy stresses Ethelberta's ability to manage, and turn to the benefit of herself and her family, even the most unpromising of situations. The sacrifice of Ethelberta's faithful lover, Christopher Julian, to the socially advantageous marriage, is treated in an equally dispassionate manner which emphasises Hardy's intention that it, and the marriage to Mountclere, should be seen as parts of the larger design which Ethelberta chooses to impose upon her life.

To this heroine Hardy has attributed many of those characteristics he felt to be desirable in a woman, or for that matter in a man, in the process of moving upwards in the social hierarchy - characteristics such as generosity towards her immediate family, reluctance to marry anyone to whom she could not reveal the truth about that family, ability to make with ease the enormous social transition from butler's daughter to society lady, to assess dispassionately and without prejudice all aspects of upper and lower class life and to judge especially critically the artificial, pretentious and false. And if the author in his personal life did not always live up to the standards set by the character he created, this in no way invalidates those standards but suggests the existence of a problem area where intention can be foiled by reality.

With the shift away from the non-tragic in this novel emphasis is placed upon Ethelberta's altruism, especially as far as her own family is concerned. Clearly, without her extraordinary generosity and devotion to her family's welfare, she is likely to have emerged as little better than a ruthless social climber. Yet this is an impression that, like the tragic possibilities of Ethelberta's situation, Hardy does not want to leave with his reader. The reasons for his emphasis remain uncertain, although Gittings has suggested we should see a portrait of the author in the character of the heroine and in the dilemmas she faces.[27] If there is truth in this claim it could well account for the absence in this novel of any strong impression that Ethelberta's determination to marry for wealth and social position is reprehensible. Gittings also states the originals for many of Ethelberta's servant-class relatives were Hardy's own relatives. In itself, the use of this personal material is not particularly surprising. However, the writing of this novel at a time when the author was still concealing from Emma Hardy his own links, through some of his more distant relatives, to the servant class does suggest autobiographical significance may be attached to Ethelberta's attempts to hide her lower class origins from her reading and listening public and from her prospective suitors.

Supporting the assertion that Ethelberta is essentially Hardy's "alter ego" is the manner in which, in this novel in particular, the voice of the narrator and the voice of the

heroine are so closely intertwined. Although the successful infiltration by Ethelberta of the snobbishly exclusive London circles provides the starting point for Hardy's satire against the upper classes, Ethelberta herself, by virtue of her intelligence and commonsense, and because she is her own harshest critic, remains relatively untouched by the narrative criticism and irony. In effect she occupies the position of observer, along with the narrator, and her judgements and assessments tend to be endorsed by the narrative voice. One such instance occurs when she recognizes the unimportance, in an historical time scheme, of her struggle to achieve social and financial success. This particular passage reads:

> Persons waging a harassing social fight are apt in the interest of the combat to forget the smallness of the end in view; and the hints that perishing historical remnants afforded her of the attenuating effects of time even upon great struggles corrected the apparent scale of her own. She was reminded that in a strife for such a ludicrously small object as the entry of drawing rooms, winning, equally with losing, is below the zero of the true philosopher's concern. (HE, 31)

Here, the narrator, Ethelberta, and, I would venture to suggest, the author are all of one mind, expressing an unanimity of opinion which recurs throughout this novel. On those few occasions when the narrator does express disapproval of Ethelberta's conduct the tone is apologetic and kindly, assuring the reader that Mrs. Petherwin's decisions continue to spring from her good intentions and from rational thought. The narrative comments which arise out of Ethelberta's appli-

cation of the principles of utilitarianism (HE, 36) to her immediate problem, the question of whether or not to marry Lord Mountclere, fall into this category. A statement to the effect that she is guilty of misapplying theoretical arguments and a suggestion that some of her concern may be a little misguided, are tempered by reminders of Ethelberta's unselfishness and unwavering loyalty to her family.

Undoubtedly, the most bitter criticism that Ethelberta has to experience is levelled at her by her brother Sol after the marriage to Mountclere. "'I never see such a deserter of your own lot as you be! But you were always like it, Berta, and I am ashamed of 'ee. More than that, a good woman never marries twice'" (HE, 46). The first half of the accusation is not new to Ethelberta, for she has already reproached herself on similar grounds. Charging herself with "disloyalty to her class and kin" (HE, 23), Ethelberta shows herself to be concerned about the irreparable communication gap her very different background has created between herself and the less educated members of the Chickerel family. In addition to the social barrier, Ethelberta's shouldering of parental duties and responsibilities increases her sense of isolation. No other family member appears willing, or able, to share the responsibility with her, but to call that isolation, desertion, as Sol is prepared to do, is quite unwarranted. It is appropriate, however, that it should be Sol who makes this accusation against his sister. Throughout, he has shown an acute awareness of class distinctions, even to the

extent of refusing to chat socially with Ethelberta and Julian while the possibility of an interruption exists, advising them, "'you'd better not bide here, talking to us rough ones. . . . if you'll go on and take no more notice o' us, in case of visitors, it would be wiser - else, perhaps, if we should be found out intimate with ye, and bring down your gentility, you'll blame us for it. . . . you keep to your class, and we'll keep to ours'" (HE, 17).

If Sol is determined to uphold the social difference between his sister and himself, Ethelberta is not quite so ready. As she looks longingly back to a way of life which has been for her supplanted, she declares to her father, "'I wish I could get a living by some simple humble occupation, and drop the name of Petherwin, and be Berta Chickerel again, and live in a green cottage as we used to do when I was small'" (HE, 28). Evidence of Mrs. Petherwin's appreciation of the humble pleasures of rural life has already been provided with her return to the family's rural home (HE, 13). Unlike the return of Grace Melbury and Georgie Slade, Ethelberta's stay at Arrowthorne Lodge is a time of contentment. She is quite free of the patronizing superiority which afflicts so many returning natives, and more than ready to appreciate the simple joys of a country existence. Nevertheless, a permanent return must be seen as an unrealistic dream, made impossible by exposure to a new and different way of life. Mrs. Chickerel shows that she is cognisant of this fact when she complains to Ethelberta, "'If we could

get as we were once, I wouldn't mind that. But we shall have lost our character as simple country folk who know nothing'" (HE, 23). Her complaint, relating mainly to the awkwardness and difficulty that would now accompany the family's return to the subservient position occupied formerly, does not leave her daughter unmoved. In order to prevent such a situation from occurring Ethelberta sets aside her impulse to a quiet rustic life, rejects the faithful Christopher Julian, and for her pains hears herself described by Sol as "a deserter of your own lot."

There are additional grounds for doubting whether Sol's accusations represent, in any way, Hardy's own opinion. The narrative support Ethelberta has received throughout the novel includes a number of references to her refusal to be handicapped by the limitations normally placed upon one of her sex. Any acceptance of Sol's view would, therefore, involve a denial of all that Ethelberta has fought against and been able to overcome, and would have to be seen as an undermining of the narrative voice in a way not usually found in Hardy's fiction. It also seems highly unlikely that the binding of Ethelberta, as Sol wants to do, to a rigid moral code which refuses to sanction the remarriage of widows, could have been endorsed by Hardy, while Sol's ultimate acceptance of Mountclere's money, although taken reluctantly and in the form of a loan, does have the effect of weakening belief in his integrity and, accordingly, his qualifications for passing judgement upon his sister.

As already mentioned, this novel is unusual because so little of the satire and criticism are directed at the figure of Ethelberta and what moral norm there is lies with the one person who controls and directs the lives of all around her. By the end she has extended her role of benefactress to encompass virtually all the remaining characters. The patient and long-suffering Christopher Julian has his consolation prize of Picotee sweetened further by Ethelberta's organization of a dowry for her sister; the wicked Lord Mountclere, truly tamed and chastened by his masterful wife, has adopted a new life-style which includes regular church attendance and moderation in alcohol; and the older Chickerels are safely ensconsed in a suburban villa with servants of their own. Were any of these people in need of Ethelberta's help? Not really, and it is doubtful if they are any the happier for it. However that matters little. Hardy has labelled this book "A Comedy in Chapters" and neither happiness nor unhappiness, nor indeed, great emotion of any sort, has much of a place in it. As a result, despite the author's assertion in the 1895 Preface to the novel that, "The characters . . . were meant to be consistent and human," the reader is left with an impression of a novel dominated by artificial caricatures. In part the comic form is responsible for this superficiality of treatment, but the method does seem to have been chosen because the author is not comfortable with his material. Novels before and after The Hand of Ethelberta provide examples of Hardy's unsure touch with the upper stratum of society, but the same cannot be said of his handling

of those who belong to the working and serving classes. A group whom Hardy usually presents in a lively and vital manner, they are, in this novel, deliberately distanced with the label, "comedy" and, if Gittings is right, distanced because the book as a whole was uncomfortably close to Hardy's personal situation.

The air of artificiality and flippancy permeating the presentation of the characters is most apparent in the dialogue, in what is essentially a novel of conversation. Because of the superficial level and stilted style of the dialogue it is very difficult to gain any real insight into the Chickerel family. Their problems, as well as the solutions to those problems are treated in so lighthearted a fashion it becomes hard to take seriously the graver comments when they do appear. Thus, Ethelberta's despair over the burden of family responsibilities and the subsequent declaration to her mother, "'I wish I was well out of it, and at the bottom of a quiet grave'" (HE, 23), seem rather incongruous because in this novel the more serious consequences of human behaviour have been almost totally ignored. For a radically different effect, achieved from words with an identical meaning, we have only to go to the scene where Tess Durbeyfield cries out in front of the entrance to the d'Urberville vaults, "'Why am I on the wrong side of this door!'" (TD, 52). This cry of desperation comes at the height of her concern over her family's plight and at a time when Tess feels she no longer has the strength to resist Alec d'Urberville's entrea-

ties that he be allowed to provide the family with the shelter and aid they so desperately need. Without doubt, here is a woman in the depths of such anguish, death, indeed, does offer her an attractive alternative.

The two women could not be more different. The calculating and rational Ethelberta would never find herself in Tess's predicament nor does she suffer from the mental torments and hesitations which plague Tess. But, in creating the figure of Ethelberta and setting her in the middle of a satire on upper class London society Hardy has written a novel that possesses very little of the qualities and insight normally associated with his work. The non-tragic mode is chiefly responsible. It has required Hardy to ignore his usual perception of human existence and write instead a narrative which barely touches the truth of life as he saw it. The Ethelberta who emerges as a result is a very un-Hardylike, non-human figure.

Ethelberta's highly developed sense of duty toward her parents does not extend as far as obedience to them and, as a result, the marriage to Mountclere takes place in spite of Chickerel's declaration that, "'I would sooner see you in your grave, Ethelberta, than Lord Mountclere's wife'" (HE, 28). Moreover, Ethelberta makes every effort to keep him in ignorance of her imminent wedding and plans to present him with a <u>fait accompli</u> which would render his objections futile. She thus acts deceitfully and in deliberate defiance of her

father's expressed wishes. For his part Chickerel has only his daughter's welfare at heart and his objections are in no way capricious. He has heard of Mountclere's reputation and wishes to protect his daughter from the unhappiness and loss of self-respect which would follow involvement with this dissipated old man. Chickerel is prepared to put aside any advantage that might accrue to his family from the marriage in order to prevent his daughter debasing herself. At this point, however, any serious ramifications which might have proceeded from Chickerel's pursuit of Ethelberta and Mountclere to Knollsea (HE, 44) are lost in the farcical turn given to the chase when it is joined by so many of the other characters, both lesser and major. Thus the question of what Ethelberta would do if faced with her father's plea not to marry is put aside. Doubt about her actions had been raised with her earlier remarks to Mountclere, '"My father might, and almost certainly would, object to it. Although he cannot control me, he might entreat me'" (HE, 39), but this doubt is never allowed to develop into a serious issue.

Although the question of filial obedience is never really expanded in The Hand of Ethelberta it is central to events in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. In the latter novel, obedience for the heroine can generally be described as falling into one of two categories. The first, and least important aspect because no ethical dilemma is involved, is Tess's undertaking of the duties and responsibilities related to everyday living. Although sometimes in response to Joan's express

request, Tess's actions are just as likely to arise from her knowledge that no other family member is capable of coping with the difficulties that have to be faced. The journey to Casterbridge with the beehives (TD, 4) is one such occasion when Tess acts, not so much in response to an order from her mother, as from obedience to an inward feeling of responsibility for the Durbeyfield family and its survival. Filial obedience becomes a more important issue as far as this discussion is concerned, when the parent's request or advice to his or her child contradicts the child's sense of what he knows to be right. Joan's demand that Tess seek help from the d'Urberville family and her advice that Angel should not be told about the early experiences of his wife-to-be are the chief examples of instances when obedience raises for Tess a very real ethical dilemma. A similar situation occurs in The Woodlanders where, as in other Hardy novels, there is parent/child conflict over whom the daughter should marry. When Grace Melbury declares to her father, "'I am promised to [Giles], father; and I cannot help thinking that in honour I ought to marry him, whenever I do marry'" (W, 11) she is experiencing the same inner certainty about where truth and honour lie as Tess Durbeyfield. Grace, however, because of her greater maturity and better education is able to verbalize her convictions in a way Tess cannot do. So while Tess can feel it is wrong to ask the Stoke d'Urbervilles for aid and the attention given her by Alec d'Urberville represents some sort of threat, she cannot express these misgivings in

words. It is doubtful whether Joan could have appreciated her daughter's arguments, but the mere fact of verbalization might have helped Tess see her own reluctance as something more than wilful disobedience, and enabled her to resist her mother's pressure. Upon her return home from The Slopes for the second time Tess is in a position to know exactly where the threat from Alec lay, and put into words what she could not previously. She can now pour out recriminations on her mother for allowing her to leave home ignorant, and therefore defenceless. Recriminations, however, cannot change the plight of unwed motherhood in which Tess now finds herself.

Although Grace can affirm with conviction the honourable course to be followed with relation to Giles Winterborne she fails to live up to the statements she makes. And fails to the extent that the startling picture drawn by Hardy of a world of nature where "The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper was interrupted; the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling" (W, 7), can, with justice, be applied to Grace and her situation. Because she possesses a dutiful and compliant nature, her good intentions are strangled, just as the "promising sapling" in the wood had been.

One further factor should be kept in mind when the subjection of Tess and Grace to parental manipulation is considered. Joan Durbeyfield and Mr. Melbury are each aware of

the power they have over their children and of their ability to overcome any resistance. Thus Joan can say of her daughter, "'She's tractable at bottom. Leave her to me'" (TD, 4), and we are told of Melbury, "He knew very well that Grace, whatever her own feelings, would either go or not go, according as he suggested" (W, 9). In these two novels, therefore, we see the parent abusing the authority of his position to force his child into an action the latter knows to be wrong. Disobedience does not appear to be a feasible alternative for either of these girls, especially at the beginning of each novel. For disobedience requires either an attitude of rebellion, which neither possesses, or a sense of personal independence which will permit value judgements to be made and adhered to, despite parental opposition. Tess's development will be in this direction and the same is true to a lesser extent of Grace. However for both this is to come later, in response to increasing maturity. In the early stages of the novels the parents' wills prevail, bringing unhappiness in their train.

Two other novels are worth examining for their treatment of the child's response to parental coercion. Both The Trumpet-Major and Under the Greenwood Tree have a heroine who possesses enough control over the family situation to enable her to escape serious parental interference. Anne Garland (The Trumpet-Major) and Fancy Day (Under the Greenwood Tree) reject the wealthy candidates favoured by their parents for men of their own choosing, and are able to do this without

alienating the mother in one instance and the father in the other. Mrs. Garland may be Anne's mother, but it is hard to see her championing of Festus Derriman as representing any great threat to Anne's happiness. Throughout this novel Anne Garland is portrayed as the dominating figure in the mother/daughter relationship, and at all times appears to be in control of a rather vacillating and immature mother. Mrs. Garland follows where Anne leads, generally deferring to her daughter's wishes, as she does in the matter of Miller Loveday's party (TM, 3). The decision not to go is made by Anne and the best Mrs. Garland can do is to try to persuade Anne to alter her refusal. Ultimately however, Miller Loveday must interfere to change Anne's mind and enable Mrs. Garland to attend the party, as had been her desire all along. Under these circumstances it seems extremely unlikely that Mrs. Garland could insist upon Anne marrying Festus Derriman. And because her mother does not insist, Anne cannot really be accused of disobedience when she fails to marry the man whom her mother has selected.

On the other hand, Fancy Day does find herself with a parent whose opposition to the man she favours is firm and apparently unshakeable. Defiance of her father's authority is out of the question for Fancy, as is acceptance of her father's decision that Dick Dewey is an unsuitable husband for his daughter. Aided by Elizabeth Endorfield (UGT, IV, 3) Fancy embarks upon a course calculated to trick her father into changing his mind. Her actions are unprincipled because

the success of Fancy's "hunger strike" depends upon the abusing of a father's love for his daughter. If Geoffrey did not value Fancy's life above all else, and certainly above the financial expenses incurred for his daughter's education and training, there would be no chance of Fancy's ploy succeeding. As it is, he is prepared to sacrifice all his carefully laid plans to ensure his daughter's happiness. There is even the suggestion that had Fancy been able to show greater evidence of heartbreak when Geoffrey Day first declared Dick to be an unacceptable candidate for his daughter's hand she might not have had to resort to the subterfuge she did. Day's admonition, "'There, never cry, my little maid! You ought to have cried afore; no need o' crying now 'tis all over'" (UGT, IV, 4) indicates his readiness to consent had he been made aware of Fancy's deep affection for Dick. Fancy's inability to do just that owes much to the fact that her feeling for Dick is little more than a flirtatious attraction which requires her father's opposition to arouse to something stronger. This basic inability of Fancy to love beyond herself colours her whole relationship with Dick and also helps to explain the callousness she displays towards her father when she manipulates him to satisfy her own ends. For Fancy, love is not a two-way relationship. She accepts the love of Dick and her father as her due, but will give very little in return.

It is probably no coincidence that Hardy's greatest conflict over the choice of a marriage partner should take place

between a mother and her son. On the whole Hardy's young women tend to be a relatively obedient group who generally defer to their parents in crucial matters. The major exceptions, Anne Garland and Ethelberta Petherwin, are unique because they occupy the role of the parent, rather than that of the daughter and therefore may be excluded from this generalization. A very different set of forces come into play in sons' relationships with their parents. Defiance is easier for a son because he tends to rely less upon his parents for his material and emotional needs. Sometimes this independence creates the satisfactory and healthy relationship which Dick Dewey and his father share (Under the Greenwood Tree). In the conversation between father and son on the merits, or otherwise, of marriage in general and of Dick to Fancy Day in particular, the elder Dewey's chief concern is for his son's welfare (UGT, II, 8). His position, that when the time is right Dick should find himself a nice girl and settle down, intimates the present time to be rather too soon. However, confronted with Dick's determination to marry Fancy, Tranter Dewey avoids all protest. The advice he gives is friendly and well-meaning, without any suggestion of jealousy or resentment over losing a son through marriage. In this he is as unlike Mrs. Yeobright (The Return of the Native) as it is possible to be.

Mrs. Yeobright is fiercely possessive of her only son who, in turn, meets his mother head on over the issues of ambition and love. Until this confrontation their relation-

ship had been a particularly close one, Clym regarding his mother as "his best friend" (RN, III, 3) and Mrs. Yeobright's devotion being only too apparent. However Clym's decisions to abandon his career as a diamond merchant and to marry a girl of whom Mrs. Yeobright disapproves shake the mother/son relationship to the core. Almost immediately communication between the two breaks down. Once this happens Clym, who has to choose between defying his mother or submitting to her authority, chooses resistance.

Defiance is for Clym the last resort. Initially he had been able to keep open the lines of communication with his mother, to the extent that Mrs. Yeobright can be considered to be Clym's first convert. Although bitterly opposing Clym's scheme to become a teacher she is nevertheless brought to a grudging acceptance of his hopes and dreams. This has not been achieved through any form of verbal communication for, in trying to win his mother's approval, Clym discovers that not only is language a very limited mode of expression, but its limitations are compounded by the manner in which Mrs. Yeobright closes her mind to all the reason and logic her son can muster. If words prove inadequate and formal education and training useless as an aid to communication, other methods do not. After Clym "had despaired of reaching her by argument" he realizes he can "reach her by a magnetism which was as superior to words as words are to yells" (RN, III, 3). How much the success of this non-verbal communication can be attributed to her maternal empathy and how much to Clym's in-

herited mode of thought is difficult to ascertain. Although Hardy himself seems to plump for the latter by declaring, "Yeobright, having inherited some of these very instincts from the woman before him, could not fail to awaken a reciprocity in her through her feelings, if not by arguments" (RN, III, 2), the overwhelming impression gained from The Return of the Native is a mother and son relationship which owes less to inherited characteristics than to shared emotions.

Certainly, Clym's power to influence his mother and to win her support remains operative only so long as Mrs. Yeobright feels the fundamental relationship between them to be untouched. Once Eustacia enters into Clym's life this is no longer true and as Mrs. Yeobright's insight becomes modified by jealousy and antagonism the obsessive side of her character comes to the fore. Impelled more or less compulsively, she acts rashly and unwisely, jumping to incorrect conclusions and making the harsh and unjust accusations which culminate in the assumptions she makes before the closed door of her son's cottage (RN, IV, 6). At this point in the novel Mrs. Yeobright's mind, prone, as we have been told, to see the world around it in terms of "A multitude whose tendencies could be perceived, though not its essences" (RN, III, 3) applies certain generalizations which have little or no applicability in this particular unconventional situation. Eustacia's refusal to open the door seems to signify her total rejection of the mother-in-law's attempt at reconciliation, a conclusion drawn all too promptly by Mrs. Yeobright.

Eustacia's wickedness has already been established for Mrs. Yeobright, even before the bewitching of Clym, by the girl's attempt to be different and non-conventional. Eustacia Vye has dared to emerge out of the "vast masses of beings, jostling, zigzagging, and processioning in definite directions . . . whose features are indistinguishable by the very comprehensiveness of the view" (RN, III, 3); out from among those whose anonymity and indistinguishable features have been prized by Mrs. Yeobright. Eustacia has sought, in daring to assert her own individuality, to disturb an established pattern of behaviour. Encountering fear from the rustics, and condemnation from the less superstitious, she is doomed to be misunderstood, above all by Mrs. Yeobright in her predisposition to regard Eustacia as an immoral person - "Good girls don't get treated as witches even on Egdon" (RN, III, 2). It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that while Eustacia hesitates, believing her husband has gone to welcome his mother, Mrs. Yeobright should assume the closed door to be further evidence of her daughter-in-law's malevolence and, turning away, walk to her death.

The cruellest blow to Mrs. Yeobright stems from her conviction that Clym is a conspirator with Eustacia in the refusal to grant admittance to the cottage. Coming after a long period of bitterness, deep enough for Mrs. Yeobright to curse motherhood and the suffering which accompanies it, this refusal takes her to the point of total despair. Responsibility for allowing his mother to arrive at this state rests

with Clym. Admittedly, he has made some attempt at placating Eustacia and Mrs. Yeobright, but more might be expected from one who has shared such a close relationship with his mother as he has done. In response to Mrs. Yeobright's opposition to Eustacia he adopts two ineffective approaches. Either he professes not to care about the wall of silence growing up between his mother and himself, or else, when the subject of Eustacia is broached, he closes his mind to Mrs. Yeobright's arguments, dismissing them as petty, malicious and untrue. Their truth, and much of what she says has validity, is rejected by Clym in a mood of self-righteous indignation. This indignation permits him to declare, "'[Eustacia] is excellently educated, and would make a good matron in a boarding-school. I candidly own that I have modified my views a little, in deference to you; and it should satisfy you'" (RN, III, 3); a statement so arrogantly and stubbornly wrong that Mrs. Yeobright can only cry out in anguish at his delusions. Here is ample evidence that Clym has shut his mind to what he knows to be true, and worse yet, that he is ignoring the suffering his mother is experiencing on his account.

Mrs. Yeobright's opposition to Eustacia is adamant and unyielding. Just how much of her opposition is justified, and how much is motivated by vindictiveness and jealousy is less certain. It cannot be denied that her possessive attitude plays a decisive part in her reactions. Undoubtedly, the marriage she wanted to take place, between Thomasin and Clym, would have created a tight family circle and cemented

all its ties. Mrs. Yeobright sees Eustacia, who is not only an outsider but a rebellious outsider, as an alien element seeking to destroy the relations between mother and son. The older woman's fears would appear to be well-founded, for the parentless Eustacia cannot view Mrs. Yeobright except as a rival and is particularly unmindful of any claim a mother might have to her son's affection and loyalty. Some of Mrs. Yeobright's other misgivings relate to Eustacia's financial and social standing, as typified by the comments, "'Don't suppose she has any money. She hasn't a farthing'" (RN, III, 3) and "'A Corfu bandmaster's daughter. . . . Her surname even is not her true one'" (RN, III, 5). Mrs. Yeobright's position here resembles that taken by many other Hardy parents toward prospective sons- and daughters-in-law, but is no more tenable than theirs. Clym rightly rejects these judgements as unworthy, both of the woman to whom they apply and of the one who makes the accusations. In still other respects her assessment of Eustacia's character is astute and realistic, and in sharp contrast to the idealized view held by her son. She recognizes just how ill-equipped the self-centred and hedonistic Eustacia is to be the wife of the ascetic Clym and foresees the disillusion which will follow such a union. As a result of this insight, her possessiveness becomes a protectiveness by means of which she seeks to shelter her son from the inevitable consequences of his involvement with Eustacia.

The greater the justification for Mrs. Yeobright's con-

victions about Eustacia's unsuitability as a wife for her son, the less chance there is of mother and son reaching a compromise. Mrs. Yeobright's passionate nature dictates the highly emotional response to what she sees as Clym's wilfulness and ensures that moderation over this issue is, for her, impossible. Thomasin's reasonable suggestion, that Clym could well have chosen someone far worse than Eustacia, does nothing to placate Mrs. Yeobright. She dismisses Thomasin's attempt at mediation with the description of herself as a "one-idea'd creature" (RN, III, 6) who has settled all her hopes and dreams on her son and for whom any disappointment is consequently the greater. Her emotionalism and singleness of mind provide a clue to Clym's behaviour after Mrs. Yeobright's death, and help to explain one of the most puzzling and ambiguous aspects of the novel, namely Clym's evolution from the idealist thinker of Book Two into the ineffectual preacher of Book Six. The wide diversity of critical opinion which has focussed upon this issue includes the following three explanations. Although each has merit, none seems to provide the total answer.

The first possibility, beginning with the assumption that Clym's aspirations are not misguided, considers the Egdon Heath rustics to be stupid yokels and regards Eustacia and Mrs. Yeobright as unworthy of Clym's love and the sacrifices made for them. The decline of Clym's ideals in Book Six becomes, under these circumstances, part of the tragic defeat inflicted by an unthinking and reactionary populace

and by two selfish women.[28] If we accept the premise that Clym's ideas are basically sound, but recognize at the same time the merit of the rustics' position, it then becomes very difficult to regard these simple countryfolk as "the villains of the piece." Much the same can be said, too, of Eustacia and Mrs. Yeobright. In their opposition to Clym's plans they must share some of the burden of blame. They have failed to provide Clym with the moral support he needed, yet he also has shirked the moral responsibilities which he owes as a son and a husband. Even before the actual influence of the two women has been removed by death, it is clear that the final responsibility for Yeobright's behaviour rests with himself. Some flaw within Clym leads him on a course which for all its idealism is impractical, headstrong and certain to cause unhappiness. And it is this same flaw or weakness which allows him to slip into a state of self-accusatory egocentricity after the deaths of his mother and Eustacia.[29]

The remaining possibility places the emphasis upon Yeobright's secular and rational approach to life and seeks to find there an explanation for Clym's paralysis of will and emotion. This hypothesis is handicapped by what would seem to be Hardy's deliberate refusal to pursue his inferences to their logical end. John Paterson states as much when he declares the failure of Clym as a character may be traced to "Hardy's reluctance to articulate the pessimistic conclusions which the image of the character plainly justified," and adds, "the alienation of the intelligent and sensitive individual

from life and society . . . was suppressed in favor of a basically irrelevant and superficial humanitarianism."[30]

Behind this unwillingness to state explicitly the cost of adherence to the modernist view of life lies Hardy's deep compassion for the plight of "the more thinking among mankind" (RN, I, 1). From our introduction to Haggard Egdon, with its appeal to "a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learnt emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair" (RN, I, 1) the emphasis is placed upon the painfulness of "present-day" existence, a painfulness which a thinking man like Yeobright, possessing the capacity for "emotional development and a full recognition of the coil of things," (RN, II, 6) is only too aware. Clearly, Hardy's intention is for Clym to be regarded as a victim of his times. Under these circumstances although despair would seem to be the inevitable response, Clym does manage to advance, what De Laura has described as, "a 'modern' and rational view of life, derived from the confident secularism of men like Mill and Arnold."[31] Although it is never stated explicitly, the reader must assume Clym's ineffectuality in Book Six stems, at least in part, from the irreconcilable nature of man's aspirations and human reality.

These various explanations partially account for Clym's behaviour after his mother's death, but they ignore the parallels between Clym's attitude of mind and his mother's. Both are shocked by loss into an obsessive singlemindedness.

Mrs. Yeobright's obsession centres upon her son who, fascinated by Eustacia Vye, has removed himself from his mother's influence. Clym experiences two shocks; the first as a result of his mother's death, and the second, from his discovery of the role Eustacia has played in that death. Disappointment in Mrs. Yeobright and remorse in Clym are transferred to the person of Eustacia. This transfer renders both emotions somewhat easier to handle at the conscious level, for if the burden of blame can be shifted elsewhere the individual is no longer faced with the same sense of his own shortcomings. Precedent for such a transfer has already been established on Egdon Heath by the rustics who attribute to Eustacia Vye the obscure and the unacceptable. Mrs. Yeobright and Clym may consider themselves superior to the rustics' superstitious fears, but each in turn will accuse Eustacia of wanton and deliberate malice on as little evidence as Susan Nunsuch has when she blames the same woman for her son's illness. Even Clym, who has dismissed as ridiculous any suggestion that Eustacia might possess supernatural powers, in his distress and anger, reverts metaphorically to traditional supersititions, declaring, "'You have held my happiness in the hollow of your hand, and like a devil you have dashed it down!'" (RN, V, 3) and "'Don't look at me with those eyes as if you would bewitch me again!'" (RN, V, 3).

After Eustacia's death, grief and remorse rebound upon Clym with even greater intensity. Now there is no-one to

blame except himself for the deaths of the two women he loved. The singlemindedness displayed in his earlier determination to marry Eustacia, and the idealism which had led to his education scheme are now concentrated upon the figure of his dead mother. Much of the terminology used to describe Clym's obsessive mother-worship and the remarks made by Clym himself carry Christian and biblical overtones. Speaking of his mother to Eustacia, Clym states, "'She was angered quickly, but she forgave just as readily, and underneath her pride there was the meekness of a child'" (RN, V, 3). Perhaps it is to go too far to suggest some hint of a Christ-figure in the person described, but there is certainly the suggestion of a Christ-like sacrifice in Clym's lament, "'O my mother, my mother! would to God that I could live my life again, and endure for you what you endured for me!'" This vision is further intensified by Clym's perception of Mrs. Yeobright as "the sublime saint whose radiance even his tenderness for Eustacia could not obscure" (RN, VI, 4). Here, with this clear statement that Clym's religiosity is bound up with the idealization of his dead mother, it becomes evident that Clym's evangelising is essentially an extension of the needs of his own personality. Under these circumstances his ineffectuality as a preacher is scarcely surprising. The fact of his being everywhere "kindly received, for the story of his life had become generally known" (RN, VI, 4), illustrates, as nothing else, the astuteness and compassion of the rustic mind. Aware of the compulsive nature of his preaching the natives are prepared to listen to Clym's words, but will not

allow themselves to find inspiration or applicability in those words. For Clym, however, this willingness to listen is fulfilment enough.

This novel, which provides us with Hardy's most vivid portrayal of filial disobedience, is also the setting for extreme, almost fanatical obedience, by Clym, to the wishes of his dead mother. However, the effect of this devotion is not to ennoble the one described by the author as "the nicest of all my heroes"[32] but to recall the sorry figure who much earlier wrote to his mother, complaining of Thomasin's behaviour (RN, II, 8). The petulant tone of that letter, prompted by rumours of Thomasin's jilting, displayed neither concern for the girl's welfare nor anger at Wildeve's apparent failure to keep faith with Thomasin. Instead, it expressed nothing more than an exaggerated concern for the Yeobright family name. Now, at the end of the novel, despite all the suffering and tragedy, Clym can still show more concern for his family's social position than for Thomasin's feelings and desires. When told by Thomasin of her wish to marry Venn he expresses disapproval because the former reddleman is not enough of a gentleman to be a suitable husband for his cousin. In addition, he urges Thomasin to move into town to increase her chances of finding for herself a professional, and therefore eligible, man. How can the Clym Yeobright who has shown enough concern about the fate of his fellow man to want to draw him up out of his ignorance be guilty, at the beginning and end of the novel, of such patronizing snobbishness?

To some extent this incongruity must be attributed to artistic failure on the part of the author. Clym's letter on the subject of Thomasin can only be seen as an outburst of genteel thinking, and its sentiments judged accordingly. Its general tone has already been endorsed by Mrs. Yeobright's earlier remarks and, together, mother and son present the narrowest and most prejudiced of points of view. The moral norm in this whole unfortunate episode is clearly found in Thomasin's declaration, "'Why don't people judge me by my acts? . . . I wish all good women were as good as I!'" (RN, II, 2) and in Venn's statement, "'Why should her going off with him to Anglebury for a few hours do her any harm? Anybody who knows how pure she is will feel any such thought to be quite unjust'" (RN, I, 11). These are sentiments later expressed by Clym when he denies Thomasin's character would be ruined should Wildeve jilt her a second time. The impossibility of reconciling two such contrary attitudes in Clym - one, an acceptance of conventional genteel standards and of judging by appearances, the other, a rejection of such standards of judgement - is one of the many puzzling and unsatisfactory aspects of this novel.

After the death of Mrs. Yeobright Clym's petty gentility becomes artistically more credible. Distraught and overwrought, losing all ability to think and judge for himself, he clings to his mother's values. But because his view is so subjective, Clym's interpretation tends to distort or over-emphasize many of those values. So although Clym's

opposition to Venn ostensibly has the same basis as Mrs. Yeobright's, namely the reddleman's lack of professional status, it may be questioned whether Mrs. Yeobright's reservations about Venn's suitability as a husband for Thomasin, would have been, prior to her death, as strong as they were earlier. There is no really convincing evidence one way or the other, but it is difficult to believe so much anguish and suffering could have left unaltered her earlier preoccupation with social status. At the time of her death she is a grieving, humbled woman who is no longer in a position to command from the rustics the deference she did formerly. Toward Venn, belonging to a stratum of society midway between the despised rustic and the much admired professional, she shows an increasing degree of toleration. Gratitude is in part responsible. Because of her debt to Venn for the role he played in recovering the family guineas (RN, III, 8), thankfulness tempers her earlier disapproval. She values too his practicality and commonsense, all the more readily taking his advice when he suggests one further attempt at reconciliation with Clym and Eustacia (RN, IV, 4).

Mrs. Yeobright's increasing acceptance of Venn is not duplicated in her son. Clym's stated objections concern, as already mentioned, the reddleman's relatively humble social status. The other aspect of his opposition, an aspect which is never expressed verbally to Thomasin, relates to his vision of himself as Thomasin's husband. As this had been one of Mrs. Yeobright's dearest wishes its enactment comes to as-

sume for Clym the nature of a duty. The resolve and the motivation are condemned at length by the narrative voice.

> It is an unfortunate fact that any particular whim of parents, which might have been dispersed by half an hour's conversation during their lives, becomes sublimated by their deaths into a fiat the most absolute, with such results to conscientious children as those parents, had they lived, would have been the first to decry. (RN, VI, 3)

Had Clym been less introverted, less self-absorbed, he would never have considered himself as a candidate for Thomasin's hand. Conversely, it is this same introversion and self-absorption which make him so unsuitable as a prospective husband. In this last chapter of the novel Clym's inward pre-occupation becomes totally entrenched. The heaviness of his mind can be appreciated, but grief is not confined to Clym alone. Thomasin has lost her husband, just as many years earlier Mrs. Yeobright while still a young woman had lost hers. Where the plight of the two widows differs from that of Clym is that each has been left with a small child who requires her attention and care. With this responsibility and consolation unavailable to Clym, his mind retreats from present reality. The distant past becomes more real than the present and he walks the heath peopling "the spot with its ancient inhabitants" (RN, VI, 1). From the more recent past, his mother's presence dominates Clym's thinking and actions. His labour in the garden and in the house at Blooms-End can be seen in this light. It is understandable that the work should assume an added significance, for it would have been

carried out by Mrs. Yeobright had she been alive. However "significance" is too mild a word in view of the comment, "it had become a religion with him to preserve in good condition all that had lapsed from his mother's hands to his own" (RN, V, 6). As Clym's mind loses touch with everyday reality he becomes more and more absorbed in the ritual of superficial observances. The maintaining of his mother's house and garden, the slavish adherence to the aspirations and prejudices she may have expressed in her lifetime and the preoccupation in his lecturing with the mother/son relationship are all part of the same pattern. Filial obedience has become for Clym an obsession.

The excessive remorse which follows Clym's determination to have his own way, irrespective of his mother's opposition, illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of the family relationship. Young adults, reaching for the freedom which maturity brings, are likely to discover the illusory nature of the term, freedom. Parental expectations and the transferring of the dependency role from the aging parent to the young adult bring a new accountability and a new sense of responsibility which the unscrupulous, or even just the distraught parent, is able to use as a lever against the child. Melbury, contending with Grace's last-minute reluctance to marry Fitzpiers, does exactly this when he declares, "'I will say, that if you refuse, I shall for ever be ashamed and aweary of 'ee as a daughter, and shall look upon you as the hope of my life no more. . . . O, you are an ungrateful

maid'" (W, 24). Much the same accusation is made when Mrs. Yeobright rebukes Clym with, "'How can you treat me so flippantly. . . . You are unnatural, Clym, and I did not expect it'" (RN, III, 5). The specific aim of both remarks is to shame the child by suggesting his failure to comply with his parent's wishes is nothing less than a perversion of the relationship between himself and that parent. With astute application, the pressure applied by playing upon the child's moral conscience and sense of honour is likely to achieve the desired result. Grace's compliant nature and a feeling of indebtedness to her father make her particularly vulnerable to this form of coercion. Although the marriage will not live up to her expectations she does manage to escape the terrible remorse which may afflict the child who disappoints his parents in the way Clym disappoints his mother.

The effects upon Clym of Mrs. Yeobright's reproaches are delayed, but are all the more intensified because of that delay. When his mother dies, seemingly as a result of his stubborn refusal to heed her warnings or listen to her pleas, his guilt knows no bounds. He accuses himself of unnatural behaviour, inasmuch as, "'Poor people who had nothing in common with her would have cared for her, and visited her had they known her sickness and loneliness; but I, who should have been all to her, stayed away like a cur'" (RN, V, 1). Clym's guilt is so overwhelming it becomes unendurable. With relief, with what could almost be described as suppressed delight, he learns of the part Eustacia has played in Mrs. Yeo-

bright's death. Suddenly he is able to absolve himself of all charges of unworthiness and transfer the blame totally to Eustacia. It is she who is "his mother's enemy" (RN, V, 6), not himself. In the period between his learning of Eustacia's refusal to open the door and his wife's death he never once mentions his own shortcomings as a son. Undoubtedly, the fierceness of his recriminations against Eustacia arises from his inability to accept the extent of his own guilt, and guilty he certainly is. Only after Eustacia's death is he able to look again at his role in the whole tragic affair and accept the responsibility which is his. "'I was a great cause of my mother's death and I am the chief cause of [Eustacia's]'" (RN, V, 9). Even with this more balanced perspective on the tragedy, Clym remains haunted by his mother's description of herself as "'a broken-hearted woman cast off by her son'" (RN, IV, 6). Her words tell of the hold all parents have over their children. No other relationship carries the same degree of responsibility, and the same terrible burden of guilt if the child should fail to live up to that responsibility.

Conclusion

The importance of the parent/child relationship in Hardy's fiction derives from the writer's custom of establishing his characters firmly in their family and community setting. As a result, Hardy's protagonists emerge, not as liberated and self-sufficient beings, but as men and women bound by ties of emotion, and sometimes by economic dependency, to the family unit. Despite, or perhaps more accurately on account of, these bonds the family frequently fails to operate in a spirit of supportive co-operation, becoming instead the setting for many of the serious conflicts which occur in the novels. Although no other parent/child struggle quite equals the intensity of that between Clym Yeobright and his mother (The Return of the Native) the areas of contention in many other instances are very similar. Issues such as the child's increasing need for independence, the insistence by the parent upon total filial obedience, differing expectations, unrealistic demands and the failure, on the part of either side, to appreciate the concerns and values of the other create almost insurmountable barriers between the child and his parent.

In any period of social change the already existing gulf between the more progressive young and their conservative elders can only deepen and become more pronounced. When, as was the case during the Victorian era, the diffusion of education permitted the children of illiterate parents to acquire basic reading and writing skills, the gap between the generations came to resemble an abyss. Exposure to new

ideas and an awareness of a wider outside world brought about a dissatisfaction with a way of life unchanged for centuries and a yearning for the greater sophistication of the towns. Education also provided in some instances the springboard whereby the highly intelligent or the extremely ambitious child could overcome the rigid class barriers and ease his way up in the social hierarchy. When this form of social mobility is found in a Hardy novel it may involve either an ambitious child or a parent who is ambitious on his child's behalf.

To the social-climbing child his lower-class, uneducated parents must appear, inevitably, as liabilities whose presence is to be kept as well hidden as possible. During the greater part of The Hand of Ethelberta the shrewd and ambitious Ethelberta Petherwin is able to achieve this feat without a great deal of inconvenience. For others it is not so easy. If, like Grace Melbury (The Woodlanders), the child is still financially dependent upon his parents there is little opportunity to conceal the exact nature of the family's social standing. However much the rough, uncultivated ways of his parents may jar on the child's nerves there are, for the well-educated girl, only two chances of escape. One is to leave home and become a governess, the other, to contract a financially and socially advantageous marriage. Because such a marriage would seem to offer so many avenues of escape, so many opportunities to rise the social hierarchy, a number of Hardy's characters intently pursue this goal, either for themselves or

for their children. Ethelberta cold-bloodedly seeks out a man with breeding and financial resources while Melbury (The Woodlanders) and Joan Durbeyfield (Tess of the d'Urbervilles) totally ignore all consideration of their daughters' happiness when they actively encourage alliances between the girls and men who are socially their superiors. The parental pressure applied, in both instances, has unfortunate results.

Adherence to the tenets of conventional morality and the more serious search for an ethically directed code of right and wrong also have their effect upon the relationships within a family. Because evidence of respectability is so important to it, conventional morality tends to concentrate upon overt acts of behaviour, judging them to be "proper" or otherwise, in terms of their social acceptability. As a result the niceties of behaviour often become all-important, as they are for Mrs. Day in Under the Greenwood Tree. Despite the essentially comic nature of Mrs. Day's resetting of the table and the occasion on which the rustics, overwhelmed in the vicar's presence by feelings of insecurity and inferiority, are particularly mindful of their manners, this type of socially conforming behaviour does have its more serious implications. When Michael Henchard (The Mayor of Casterbridge) places a very high value on conformity it is with full knowledge of his own need to maintain the appearance of absolute respectability, especially in view of his somewhat murky past. Therefore, although his grievances against Elizabeth-Jane are rooted elsewhere, his preoccupation with respectability

ensures they will find their expression in his criticism of her general deportment. His criticism underlines the essential problem of judging the overt action rather than the intent or motivation. To emphasise socially conforming behaviour is to dismiss personal integrity and moral awareness as unimportant. This is an inversion of values which Hardy bitterly denounces in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Conventional morality condemns Tess outright. Her mother urges her to push the past into the background and make the most of any opportunity which might offer itself. In the middle is Tess, torn between her belief in society's judgment and her innate sensations which tell her she has done no wrong. Her determination not to compromise her own high moral standards is doomed to failure, but the failure is more society's than Tess's.

The special duties and responsibilities associated with the parent/child relationship distinguish it from all other close human relationships. During the child's early years a large part of the parents' role is devoted to the nurturing and loving of that child. Failure to satisfy this basic level of human need is not only a denial of the child's rightful entitlement, but may damage his emotional development. As the child grows older the former one-sided relationship, in which the major contributor is the parent, tends to become more reciprocal in character. In return for the years of care the parent expects from his child obedience and respect. He may also come to assume that the child will help

the family's fortunes by marrying well in the case of a girl and by pursuing a profitable career if the child is a male. However, should the child fail to live up to these expectations he is considered to be an ingrate who refuses to comply with his parents' wishes out of some streak of stubborn perversity. There is little attempt by the parent to understand the motivation behind the refusal and no real willingness to allow the child enough independence to learn from his mistakes. Most of Hardy's heroines will defer to their parents' wishes, but the daughter who commands some authority within the family circle may well be able to gain her way without having to resort to defiance. She is fortunate if she is able to achieve this for otherwise her fate may be that of Clym Yeobright (The Return of the Native), who discovers the price of filial defiance can be very high indeed.

No conscientious child can ignore the years of parental devotion which have preceded his entry into adulthood and in The Return of the Native Hardy portrays a man brought to the point of total mental collapse by the knowledge that he has, by his actions, betrayed his mother's love. The dual anguish of this mother and son highlight the strengths and weaknesses inherent in all parent/child relationships. Inextricably linked to each other by blood and emotional ties, the Yeobrights enjoy a close and happy relationship which has survived untarnished Clym's sojourn in Paris. However, because of this closeness and intimacy the relationship is unable to cope with an outsider's intrusion. The mother is unwilling

to give up a son whose welfare has been her sole concern while Clym's attachment to his mother is, despite his desire for Eustacia, stronger and more entrenched than he realizes. Love within the family cannot be discarded and forgotten as may happen when the passion of an outside love relationship fades. Family ties and responsibilities are likely to haunt the child and shape the direction of his life even after the death of the loved one. Clym's plight may not be typical, but it does emphasize the potential for tragedy found within the family situation. In looking at the human dilemma in general, Hardy was only too aware of the very special problems which arise out of the parent/child relationship.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Virginia Woolf, The Common Reader: Second Series (London: The Hogarth Press, 1959), p. 251.

[2] Albert Joseph Guerard, Thomas Hardy: The Novels and the Stories (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 73.

[3] D. H. Lawrence, Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1936), p. 410.

[4] See particularly: "A lover is not a relative; and he isn't quite a stranger; but he may end in being either" (HE, 6), and "There can be no such thing as strong friendship between a man and a woman not of one family" (HE, 9).

[5] Emma Clifford, "The Child: The Circus: and Jude the Obscure," Cambridge Journal, 7(1954), p. 533.

[6] H. Rider Haggard, Rural England: Being an Account of Agricultural and Social Researches Carried out in the Years 1901 and 1902 (2 vols., London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902).

[7] Harold Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966), p. 182.

[8] Orel, p. 170.

[9] Ruth A. Firor, Folkways in Thomas Hardy (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1931), pp. 138-141.

[10] Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928 (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1962), p. 120.

[11] Haggard, II, p. 545.

[12] Haggard, I, pp. 282-285.

[13] Richard Jefferies, Hodge and his Masters (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1937), p. 331.

[14] Life, p. 32.

[15] Life, p. 23.

[16] Guerard, p. 28.

[17] John Paterson, The Making of "The Return of the Native" (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 106.

[18] Life, p. 16.

[19] Robert Gittings, Young Thomas Hardy (London: Heinemann, 1975), p. 4.

[20] " . . . an almost standard woman, but for the slight incautiousness of character inherited from her race" (TD, 14) and "with the woman's instinct to hide (TD, 31).

[21] Bernard J. Paris, "'A Confusion of Many Standards': Conflicting Value Systems in Tess of the d'Urbervilles," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 24 (1969), p. 59.

[22] Orel, p. 182. Discussing the increasing nomadic tendency of the labourer, Hardy states, "With uncertainty of residence often comes a laxer morality and more cynical views of the duties of life."

[23] Bernard J. Paris, "Experiences of Thomas Hardy," in The Victorian Experience: The Novelists, ed. Richard A. Levine (Ohio University Press, 1976), p. 219.

[24] Roy Morrell, Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965), p. 20.

[25] J. I. M. Stewart, Thomas Hardy: A Critical Biography (London: Longman, 1971), pp. 178-179 and Trevor Johnson, Thomas Hardy (New York: Arco, 1971), p. 149.

[26] J. O. Bailey, "Hardy's Mephistophelian Visitants,'" PMLA, 41 (1946), p. 1168.

[27] Gittings, Ch. 19.

[28] This interpretation is propounded by Richard Beneventuto in "The Return of the Native as a Tragedy in Six Books," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 26 (1971), pp. 83-93.

[29] Charles Child Walcutt, "Character and Coincidence in The Return of the Native" in Twelve Original Essays on Great

English Novels, ed. Charles Shapiro (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1960), pp. 153-173 and Leonard W. Deen, "Heroism and Pathos in Hardy's The Return of the Native," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 15 (1960), pp. 207-219. The self-destructive impulses of Clym are emphasised in these two essays and both critics make comparisons between The Return of the Native and Shakespearean tragedy, Deen stating that, "Hardy seems to have conceived Clym, at least in the beginning, as a kind of Hamlet" (p. 213).

[30] Paterson, p. 66

[31] David J. De Laura, "'The Ache of Modernism' in Hardy's Later Novels." ELH, 34 (1967), p. 397.

[32] Life, p. 358.

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